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BEING A PRELIMINARY REPORT UPON THE
ADMISSIBLE BUT HITHERTO UNALLOWED - FOR
EVIDENCE AFFECTING THE PROBLEM
OF THE POET SHAKESPEARE'S
IDENTITY

BY

J. DENHAM PARSONS

Author of 'The Nature and Purpose of the Universe'; 'Moto, Forma e Spontaneità'—a series of articles on philosophy contributed to an Italian Review, &c.

LONDON

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

1920



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P R E F A C E

Although from youth a ridiculer of all the literature known to him as supporting the Bacon-Shakespeare theory—for example first the Donnelly decipherings, and at a later date the Owen decipherings and the Gallup decipherings, and a general argument based chiefly upon literary parallelisms, the author has always held the Stratfordian tradition to be illogical in one not unimportant respect ; that is to say, to the extent of first picturing as the poet Shakespeare, a young man from Warwickshire born of illiterate parents, and come to London without a university education to seek his fortune, and then failing to explain how it is that an entire absence of provincialisms, and a presence on practically every page of what one authority has well styled ‘college elegance,’ distinguishes his *very earliest poetry*—‘Venus and Adonis,’ ‘Lucrece,’ and ‘Love’s Labour’s Lost.’

An entirely independent inquiry into the problem of the identity of the poet Shakespeare was therefore started by the author. And some of the more important of the fresh facts come across by him are set forth in this collective edition, for review, of certain privately distributed pamphlets.

J. DENHAM PARSONS.

‘RAVENSWOOD,’
45, SUTTON COURT ROAD,
CHISWICK, W.

1920-8-26.

Copies 35. post free.

At the request of a well-known Shakespearian, the sub-surface coincidences suggestive of signalling have been audited by J. S. L. Millar, Esq., W.S.

THE LABEO-SHAKESPEARE EVIDENCE

BEING THE FIRST OF TWO SETS OF FACTS PRESSED UPON
THE NOTICE OF THE SHAKESPEARE TERCENTENARY
COMMITTEE IN 1915, AS AFFECTING THE PROBLEM
OF THE POET SHAKESPEARE'S IDENTITY

BY

J. DENHAM PARSONS

*Author of 'The Nature and Purpose of the Universe'; 'Moto, Forma e Spontaneità'—
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LONDON

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR, AT
45, SUTTON COURT ROAD, CHISWICK

THE LABEO-SHAKESPEARE EVIDENCE

I

In almost every Shakespearian's library there is a copy of an exceptionally useful work of reference of over 1,000 pages, called 'The Shakspere Allusion Book,' and published by Chatto and Windus. But it has two blemishes.

The first is its title. For although the traditional poet Shakespeare usually (and many authorities have said 'always') signed in the spelling Shakspere, the first volume, though presenting in its 528 pages all the allusions to the poet as a poet for the first fifty years and more, does not present even one allusion to the poet as a poet whose name was spelt as the actor usually signed. There is a story of an anonymous diary, which "may be a myth," once having been referred to as if containing such an allusion; and that is the title's sole support.

The chief flaw, however, is the manner in which the evidence about Labeo is presented.

II

Eight pages are devoted to the Labec-Shakespeare question—almost six to quotations and more than two to comment. And yet it must be submitted that there is no clear sign of genuine willingness to present the actual case for a belief that Labeo was a nickname for the poet Shakespeare. For while there are repeated editorial assurances that "it is certain that Shakspere was not meant," "in no case does Labeo mean Shakspere," and so on, John Marston's one reference to Labeo is presented without, and even without any reference to, its illuminating and Shakespeare-pointing context; while out of the many clues to the identity of Labeo given by Joseph Hall, those most favourable to an argument that Labeo was the poet Shakespeare are either not shown so to be or omitted altogether.

III

All that the 'Shakspere Allusion Book' quotes about Labeo from Marston, consists of the two lines—

"So *Labeo* did complaine his love was stone,
Obdurate, flinty, so relentlesse none."

There is no accompanying explanation. And the nearest approach to comment, is a statement in a general summing-up note to the effect that there may be a reference to 'Venus and Adonis.'

Now even if one be wholly unaware of Hall's earlier reference to Labeo as a writer of poetry in "another's name," this can be seen to be a misleading way of presenting Marston's only allusion to Labeo by such nickname.

IV

The essential facts are as follows. Marston in 1598 published a poem, 'The Metamorphosis of Pigmalion's Image,' which was an imitation of 'Venus and Adonis': for like it the introduction mentions that the poem is an initial effort—"the first bloomes of my Poesie," like it the plot is taken from Ovid and is a story of love and metamorphosis, like it 'tis told in stanzas of six lines, like it the rhyme is a b a b c c, and like it the conclusion is about Paphos and Venus; the last two lines of Shakespeare's poem running—

"Holding their course to *Paphos*, where their queen
Meanes to immure herselfe and not be seen."

And the last two lines of Marston's poem running—

"*Cyprus* was *Paphos* call'd, and evermore
Those Ilanders do *Venus* name adore."

Appended to this imitation of 'Venus and Adonis' by Marston, was a piece of verse by him entitled 'The Author in prayse of his *precedent Poem*.' The second and shorter of its two divisions apparently includes allusions to Hall and his recently published volumes of satires—as to our knowledge does at least the fourth of Marston's five following satires. The first and longer part censures his own 'precedent Poem,' and concludes—

"And in the end, (the end of love I wot)
Pigmalion hath a jolly boy begot.
So Labeo did complaine his love was stone,
Obdurate, flinty, so relentlesse none:
Yet *Lynceus* knowes that in the end of this,
He wrought as strange a metamorphosis.
Ends not my Poem then surpassing ill?
Come, come, Augustus, crowne my laureat quill."

The censure of his own poem by Marston which thus ends, and is satirically headed "prayse," is in the next two lines said to be a device to escape being "lasht" by some rival satirist—doubtless Hall—for its faults. And the question of the last quoted line but one, is an obvious reference to a line near the end of Hall's final satire (VI. 1), running "Now hath

not Labeo done wondrous well? "; which of itself suggests that Labeo might be a nickname for the author of the poem Marston had imitated, for one of the things said of Labeo by Hall just before the commendation of "wondrous well" thus evidently replied to by Marston's "surpassing ill," was that he had marred his poetry with too liberal a use of two-word adjectives—which is the outstanding fault of 'Venus and Adonis.'

This reason for thinking that Labeo might be a nickname for the author of 'Venus and Adonis' is, however, neither the only nor the best such reason supplied by the quoted passage. For Marston's couplet—

"So *Labeo* did complaine his love was stone,
"Obdurate, flinty, so relentlesse none:"

is an obvious use of lines 200-1 of 'Venus and Adonis'—

"Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel,
Nay more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth?"

And as Lynceus was but the conventional corroborator of statements, as an all-seeing one, Marston's next two lines—

"Yet *Lynceus* knowes, that in the end of this,
He wrought as strange a metamorphosis,"

show that Marston is chaffing the author of 'Venus and Adonis,' that is to say, chaffing the actual poet Shakespeare, because his, Marston's, imitation of Shakespeare's tale of love and metamorphosis, supplies much the livelier metamorphosis story. Labeo, is the "He" who "wrought as strange a metamorphosis"; and the metamorphosis of a beloved hero into a flower without the consummation of love, was certainly eclipsed in cheerfulness by the metamorphosis of a statue into a "jolly boy" producing girl of surpassing loveliness.

With directness, and clarity, therefore, does Marston identify Labeo with the author of 'Venus and Adonis,' and thus with the poet Shakespeare.

V

Of the many proper names used by Hall as a satirist, all save Labeo were either names of gods—like Jove, or of ancient notables as such—like Lynceus the all-seeing Argonaut, or nicknames for types. And as Labeo was the one and only name of a fabled or historical hero or notable person of bygone days that had been applied by Hall to a living contemporary, it is quite certain that Marston must have referred to the same living contemporary by the name Labeo as a nickname or mask, as Hall had previously referred. Hence as we have found Marston, the later satirist, to use Labeo as a mask for the author of 'Venus and Adonis,' we should find Hall to have so used such name.

Now Hall's first mention of Labeo is in the first satire of the second of the three books of his first or 1597 volume of satires. The satire begins thus—

“ For shame, write better *Labeo*, or write none,
Or better write, or *Labeo* leave alone ;
Nay call the *Cynick* but a wittie foole,
Thus to abjure his handsome drinking bole ”

And on the assumption that, as Marston a year later indicated, Labeo stands for the author of ‘ Venus and Adonis,’ we would here have an obvious reference to the Ovidian motto of ‘ Venus and Adonis’—which is about Apollo handing the water of poetical inspiration to the poet in a *poculum* or bowl.

Further on seven italicised lines which end with the advice “ Then, Labeo, or write little or write none,” begin “ Ther’s so much labour lost.” And on the stated assumption, this would almost certainly be a reference to Shakespeare’s earliest comedy ‘ Love’s Labour’s Lost.’

Then again, from line 37 to line 54 is, on the same assumption, clearly a reference to Shakespeare’s earliest Tragedy ‘ Titus Andronicus ’—for “ Vulcan’s own forge ” echoes “ Vulcan’s badge ” (II., 1), and “ black story ” is a fit description of so repulsive a tale, while in the satire as in the play there are three or four references to Troy. Justified is line 54, “ For shame ! or better write, or *Labeo* write none.”

There follow ten lines of general allusion, the satire concluding “ For shame ! write cleanly, Labeo, or write none.” And four things should be noted. The satire is from the point of view of a young student for holy orders at Cambridge who was a Puritan. It is definite censure directly addressed to a living contemporary. It is deserved censure—on the assumption that Marston identified Labeo with the author of ‘ Venus and Adonis.’ And it is friendly censure—for the obvious objective is that Labeo should be induced to go on writing poetry, but poetry of a more elevating character.

VI

Only in one satire of Hall’s first volume does the mask name Labeo occur. But it occurs in several satires of Hall’s second volume, issued early in 1598 ; beginning with its very first satire.

This satire (IV., 1) commences, “ Who dares upraid these open rimes of mine.” And though the mask name Labeo does not occur till the 37th line, and then there are eight lines directly about him, the satire is evidently addressed to him from the first, as to a trusted acquaintance or correspondent who had been discussing with him the details of his satires. For example,

Hall alludes to Labeo as a "friendly reader" of "my crabbed pamphlet" who had somehow conveyed his candid opinion of "each peevish line."

As to the eight lines directly about Labeo, they run as follows—

"*Labeo* is whip't, and laughs mee in the face
Why? for I smite and hide the galled place.
Gird but the *Cynicks* Helmet on his head
Cares he for *Talus* or his flayle of lead?
Long as the craftie *Cuttle* lieth sure
In the blacke *Cloud* of his thick vomiture;
Who list complaine of wronged faith or fame
When hee may shift it to anothers name?"

Here we have what is, so to speak, the summing up of Hall's second volume reply to the criticism by the contemporary writer nicknamed Labeo of the satire aimed at him in Hall's first volume.

Labeo "laughs mee in the face," says Hall. And why? Because, says Hall, although I have whipped him with satire, I have to "hide" something about Labeo—he calls it the "place," but shows that it was Labeo's identity. Labeo wore a "Helmet" that protected him from the "flayle," says Hall—obviously the fabled helmet of Pluto conferring invisibility. Labeo, says Hall, was a "craftie Cuttle" who by ejecting an inky fluid had secured for himself a protecting cloud of darkness. The laughing Labeo, says Hall, had no great desire to complain, because, even had I wronged his faith or fame, he could "*shift it to anothers name.*"

The 'Shakspeare Allusion Book,' though it devotes pages to the question of Labeo's identity, does not quote this passage—and does not even mention it. But its importance cannot be denied. It is a clear statement by Hall that the living poet nicknamed by him Labeo, who happens to be the only contemporary writer addressed in his satires—and is there addressed again and again, wrote his poetry in 'anothers name.' And as has been shown, this same Labeo is identified by Marston with the author of 'Venus and Adonis.'

VII

The next line deals with a character nicknamed Calvus, and the next line to that with a character nicknamed Pontice; and so on to the end of the satire. But after two satires, we come to another addressed to Labeo at the beginning.

This satire (IV., 4) allots Labeo the additional nickname of Sigalion—the silent one, or wisher of silence. For it opens,

"Can I not touch some upstart carpet-shield," and after a while goes on—

"But straight *Sigalion* nods and knits his browes,
And winkes and waftes his warning hand for feare,
And lisps some silent letters in my eare?
Have I not vow'd for shunning such debate?"

Let *Labeo*, or who else list for me,
Go loose his eares and fall to *Alchimie*."

And yet another three satires further on (IV., 7), we come to a three word mention of Labeo in a list of things "I loathe"; the three words "Or *Labeos* poems."

VIII

We then meet with nothing more about Labeo in Hall's satires, till we come to his long concluding satire of over 300 lines.

This commences—

"*Labeo* reserves a long nayle for the nonce,
To wound my Margent through ten lines at once
Much worse than *Aristarchus* his black Pile
That pierc'd old *Homers* side;
And makes such faces, that mee seames I see
Some foule *Megaera* in the tragedie,
Threatning her twined snakes at *Tantales* ghost."

And as *Aristarchus* was the far-famed editor of *Homer's* poems, this would appear to be an admission by Hall that *Labeo* had helped him with friendly criticisms of his satires.

At line 163 begins what, from drifting on to an allusion to *Labeo*, would appear to be an allusion to *Labeo* as *Balbus*. This starts—

"But why doth *Balbus* his dead-doing quill
Parch in his rustie scabbard all the while,
His golden fleece ore-growne with moldy hore
As tho he had his witty workes forswore?"

And it is a reference to the circumstance that *Balbus* only worries the printing press when "in debt againe" and shrinking from "the Catch-poles fist." There is then an allusion to "that bold Satyre"—apparently II. 1, the first addressed to *Labeo*. And then the connected couplet—

"So *Labeo* weens it my eternall shame,
To prove I never earnd a poets name."

Then at line 215 we come to the couplet—

"Now, as it is, beshrew him if he might,
That would his browes with *Cæsars* laurell dight."

And this should remind us of three things, (1) that *Lucius Cornelius Balbus* major wrote a history of *Julius Cæsar* (Suet. 'Caes.' 81), (2) that *Lucius Cornelius Balbus* minor wrote a play

about Julius Cæsar (' Iter '), and (3) that at the date Hall published this allusion to Balbus, the early spring of 1598, the poet Shakespeare either had recently written, or was engaged in writing, his play entitled ' Julius Cæsar '—which is known to have been on the London Stage in September, 1599, and may have been produced a considerable time before.

Passing on, we come at line 245 to a passage packed full with clues to Labeo's identity—

" Tho *Labeo* reaches right : (who can deny,)
The true straynes of *Heroicke* Poesie,
For he can tell how fury reft his sense
And *Phæbus* fild him with intelligence,
He can implore the heathen Deities,
To guide his bold and busy enterprise ;
Or filch whole Pages at a clap for need
From honest *Petrarch*, clad in English weed ;
While big *But Ohs* ech stranzæ can begin,
Whose trunk and tayle sluttish and hartlesse bin ;
He knows the grace of that new elegance
Which sweet *Philisides* fetch't of late from *France*,
That well beseem'd his high-stil'd *Arcady*,
Tho others marre it with much liberty ;
In Epithets to join two words in one,
Forsooth for Adjectives cannot stand alone,
As a great Poet could of *Bacchus* say,
That he was *Semele-femori-gena*.
Lastly he names the spirit of *Astrophell*,
Now hath not *Labeo* done wondrous well ? "

Little else that needs concern us is still to be told of Hall's final satire ; the next line running " But ere his Muse her weapon learn to weild " and all that follows about Labeo being to the effect that as a poet " The shepe-cote first " had been his nursery, " Or else hath been in *Venus* chamber train'd." But having started out with a knowledge that Marston, writing some months after Hall published his second and last volume of satires including the one before us, alluded to the author of ' Venus and Adonis ' as Labeo, it is our duty to see if the apparently specially designed bunch of clues to the identity of Hall's Labeo given in the just quoted passage ending in the " wondrous well " to which Marston arguably retorts with his " surpassing ill," can be accommodated to what we know of the poet Shakespeare.

Now the poet Shakespeare undoubtedly had at this date, early in 1598, reached " the true straynes of *Heroicke* Poesie " ; having left off producing such poetry as ' Venus and Adonis,' and ' Lucrece,' and " Love's Labour's Lost ' and ' Titus Andronicus,' and having given to the world ' Romeo and Juliet,' ' Richard II.,' ' Richard III.,' and ' Henry IV.' So the clue of the first couplet dovetails well enough.

As to the next four lines about Phœbus filling Labeo with intelligence, this would be but a paraphrase of the 'Venus and Adonis' motto about Apollo handing its author a bowl full of the water of poetic inspiration.

Then comes the couplet about filching "whole Pages" from "honest *Petrarch* clad in English weed." Now though Drayton had four years earlier denounced as "a fault too common" the tendency "to filch from Desportes or from Petrarch's pen," he referred to the publication as if original English sonnets of what were little more than translations of short poems by French or Italian poets and not to filching from any English translation of Desportes or Petrarch. Moreover, though a few odd poems by Petrarch had been translated, it was not true of Petrarch in 1598 that he stood "clad in English weed." On the other hand, Plutarch did stand "clad in English weed"—in the shape of North's famous translation of 'Plutarch's Lives.' And though no writer could accurately be said to have taken "whole Pages" from Petrarch, the poet Shakespeare had just taken, or was just taking, "whole Pages" from Plutarch, for his play 'Julius Cæsar'; a play arguably elsewhere referred to by Hall in this very satire, as we have already had occasion to observe.

There follows the couplet about "big *But Ohs*" beginning each stanza of Labeo's poetry. Now by no possible chance can any poet to whom Hall would have thought it worth his while to address satire after satire, have begun many stanzas with such an inelegancy as a *But Oh*, whether big or little. And as a matter of fact a long search by the writer of this essay in the stanzaic poetry by Hall's living contemporaries and already published when his satires came out, revealed but one specimen of a stanza so commencing. It was by the poet Shakespeare. And it was in 'Venus and Adonis.' After a stanza ending with Venus saying to Adonis—

"For fro the stillitorie of thy face excelleng,

Coms breath perfumd, that breedeth love by smelling :"
the next (and 74th) stanza begins—

"But oh what banquet wert thou to the tast."

Thus if Hall was, as a Puritan satirist, putting in a few additional criticisms of 'Venus and Adonis,' it was a most likely point for remark.

Next as to the "new elegance" of "two words in one" Epithets or Adjectives fetched by Philisides, Sir Philip Sidney, from France, and used with too "much liberty" by Labeo. Here the poet Shakespeare is most plainly the man. His very first stanza as a poet, contained four such double-barreled adjectives in its six lines—"purple-colour'd," "rose-cheek'd," "sick-thoughted," and "bold-fac'd." And although his creative energy greatly enriched our language with other examples, "much liberty" can certainly be found in an adventure that

included among its very numerous creations such specimens in the later stanzas as such-distilling, deep-sweet, deep-sore, angry-chafing, scent-snuffing; foul-cankering, foolish-witty, sounds-resembling, cold-pale, flap-mouthed, deep-dark, true-sweet, and silly-mild. Moreover Hall's second and Latin example, *Semele-femori-gena*, is by its triple instead of double form suggestive that Labeo had indulged even in a *three* words in one Adjective; and the poet Shakespeare had so indulged, for in the seventh stanza of 'Lucrece' he has the adjective "all-too-timeless."

There remains, ere Hall sums up his twenty-line list of clues to Labeo's identity with the question "Now hath not Labeo done wondrous well?", the sixth and final clue of the set—

"Lastly he names the spirit of Astrophell."

And here again, as in each of the other last and best clues of the set, only the poet Shakespeare will fit the clue provided. Not only was Shakespeare the foremost and most florid adopter of Sidney's (and therefore Astrophel's) innovation in 'Arcadia' of "two words in one" Adjectives—for he continued in 'Lucrece,' with such examples as rash-false, ambitious-foul, poor-rich, cursed-blessed, and feeling-painful, his over-free creations thereof. But Shakespeare in 'Venus and Adonis,' like Sidney (and therefore Astrophel) in 'Astrophel and Stella,' sang a passion that was never consummated—compare Shakespeare's "They that love best their loves shall not enjoy," and Sidney's "forc't from Stella ever dear. . . . By iron lawes of duty to depart." Moreover Spenser's fine poem 'Astrophel,' an elegy on the death of Sidney, is known to have been circulating in manuscript years before the publication of 'Venus and Adonis'; and Shakespeare like the author of 'Astrophel' had gone to Ovid for inspiration, like the author of Astrophel in his "But he for none of them did care a whit" had pictured his hero as a male wooed but not won, like the author of 'Astrophel' had pictured his hero as fighting a Boar, like the author of 'Astrophel' represented his hero as undergoing metamorphosis, like him employed a six line stanza, and like him favoured the rhyme a. b. a. b. c. c.

IX

Such are the definite clues to Labeo's identity. And such is the way in which those clues taken as a set, and more especially the final clues to Labeo's identity given by Hall taken as a set, point to the poet Shakespeare as Labeo. But there is also the clue of the selection of Labeo as the mask name of this Elizabethan writer of poetry in, as Hall tells us, "another's name"; a clue that is indirect rather than direct.

In this connection the 'Shakespeare Allusion Book' quotes Smith's Latin dictionary as saying that Labeo signifies 'the

one who has large lips.' Quite so. But the Shakspeare Allusion Book conspicuously omits to quote Lewis and Short's Latin dictionary or White and Riddell's Latin dictionary, both of which go further and also point out that Labeo was a well known cognomen or family surname among the Romans of classic times, and both of which standard works specify Antistius Labeo the younger, the lawyer and statesman who offended his sovereign by exercising his power to select a senator other than as such sovereign had desired, as the most famous bearer of such cognomen. There is no logic in assuming that Hall's nickname, not for a particular type, but for the one living person directly satirised by him as a contemporary writer, *must* have been chosen because of its root-meaning. And the real difficulty is not to find a large-lipped Elizabethan, but to decide whether the Labeo of a bygone age this Elizabethan writer of poetry in "another's name" was presumably named after as bearing some historical likeness to, was so named in relation to the poetry standing in "another's name," or as regards his masked identity; a matter into which one could not go without considering the larger problem of the identity of the poet Shakespeare.

As to the previous suggestions regarding Labeo's identity, namely Chapman—by Warton in the XVIIIth century, Drayton—by Singer early in the XIXth century, first Marston, then Thomas Watson, and then "Drayton or Chapman"—by Grosart, and Marston—by Professor Routh in the 'Cambridge History of English Literature,' not one of them can be got to meet the full set of definite clues to Labeo's identity taken as a set. Indeed, none pass even the first test; for Chapman had not written any amatory poetry to which Hall's denunciation as "uncleanly" could apply, the same is true of Drayton, Marston identified Labeo with the author of 'Venus and Adonis' and so could not himself have been Labeo, and Watson was dead long years before Hall advised Labeo to "write better."

X

It has been shown, however, that every one of the many direct and definite clues to the identity of the contemporary poet alluded to by the Elizabethan satirists Hall and Marston as Labeo, can be associated with the poet Shakespeare. The claim is therefore respectfully made that, whatever may be inferred from the choice of Labeo as his nickname in satire, Labeo stands demonstrated to have been a nickname for the actual poet Shakespeare. And as Hall alluded to Labeo as a writer of poetry in "another's name," it must at the same time be urged that there should be an inquiry and report by representative Shakespearians as to what was the name masked by "another's name"; the identity of the true author of the Shakespearian poems and plays being very plainly at issue.

NOTES REGARDING LABEO.

(1) *Anti-Stratfordian theories and Labeo.* In the paper prepared for submission to the Shakespeare Tercentenary Committee in 1915, entitled 'The Labeo-Shakespeare Evidence,' the author purposely avoided dealing with the relation of such evidence to the various theories of mistaken identity which have been advanced regarding our national poet; it being desirable that the identicalness of Labeo and the poet Shakespeare should first be shown.

No relation could be found by the author to exist between such evidence and Herr Carl Bleibtreu's 1907 theory that Roger Manners, Earl of Rutland, was the true author of the Shakespearian poetry. And none between it and the theory of Halliwell-Phillipps's assistant, Mr. J. H. Greenstreet, in 1891, that William Stanley, Earl of Derby, was the true author. It needs notice, however, that Francis Bacon, who like the most famous of the Labeos of old was both a lawyer and a statesman, had like him offended his sovereign by voting other than as such sovereign had desired—Antistius Labeo the younger as regards the choice of a senator, Francis Bacon as regards the Triple Subsidy Bill of 1593.

(2) *Labeo from a cryptographical standpoint.*—The names Labeo and Bacon are cryptographical equivalents, as both have the letter numerical value 33. And it should also be pointed out that Marston's riddle about some famous contemporary writer of 'true judicious stile' nicknamed Mutius (=the silent one), running—

' whose silent name
One letter bounds '

Scourge of Villanie, ix.,

where Marston may be supposed to be alluding to Hall's satire iv. of book iv. and its application to Labeo of the additional nickname of Sigalion (= the silent one), would have a logical answer in—

C = 100 = Francis (= 67) Bacon (= 33).

The three authorised title pages

[*Roman numerical letters* = 10,590 ; *Other letters* = 1,180]

VENVS AND ADONIS

Vilia miretur vulgus ; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua

.

LVCRECE

.

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THE GREAT TABOO

IN ENGLISH LITERARY CIRCLES

Being a set of five questions related thereto publicly addressed to the authority (Sir Sidney Lee) providing our 800 page tercentenary biography of Shakspeare of Stratford upon Avon as by assumption identical with the poet Shakespeare

BY

J. DENHAM PARSONS

Author of 'Our Sun-God, or Christianity before Christ'; 'The Non-Christian Cross'; 'The Nature and Purpose of the Universe'; 'Moto, Forma e Spontaneità'—a series of articles on philosophy contributed to an Italian review; and 'The "Read if thou canst"'

Epitaph at Stratford upon Avon: a
Study in Coincidence.'

L O N D O N

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

1919

17 and 3 following

P R E F A C E

The herewith presented booklet may be said to explain itself. But a sort of Contents Table is perhaps desirable :

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L'ENVOI

And it should perhaps be observed that copies of the earlier and only privately circulated booklet to which reference is made herein, 'The "Read if thou canst" Epitaph at Stratford upon Avon,' are to be seen at the British Museum and Guildhall and London Libraries in the metropolis, the University Library at Cambridge, and the Bodleian at Oxford. Also that copies of the present brochure will for twelve months or more be obtainable by post from the author, post-free, 1/-, on application to him at the address given below.

J. DENHAM PARSONS.

RAVENSWOOD,
45, SUTTON COURT ROAD,
CHISWICK, W.

1919, iv, 29.

THE GREAT TABOO

IN ENGLISH LITERARY CIRCLES

QUESTION I

THE 'POLIMANTEIA' SEMBLANCE OF SUPPRESSION

I

In the year 1784 died the renowned Dr. Johnson, the dictatorial lexicographer, biographer, essayist, and Shakespearian, who as a Shakespearian declined to—

“waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility, upon faults too evident for detection and too gross for exaggeration”

in the shape of ‘Cymbeline’ (the play by Shakespeare that Tennyson for one judged beyond all price), declared that ‘Macbeth’ has in it “no nice discriminations of character,” and held ‘Hamlet’ to be remarkable for (save the mark!) the mirth-producing quality of the scene where the hero feigns madness. His preface to the edition of the plays of Shakespeare issued by him in 1765, alludes to the traditional poet as having arrived in London as a “needy adventurer.” And later on we find Dr. Johnson referring to a close friend, Dr. Farmer of Cambridge, as having in the most successful treatise on a subject of controversy ever written, his ‘Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare’ issued in 1767, “completely finished” the old standing dispute as to whether the poet was a learned man or an ignorant man—in favour of his ignorance.

In the year 1797 died the said Dr. Farmer, who in the preface to the second edition of his ‘Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare,’ which was issued the same year as the first edition, inserted the self-approbative remark—

“I hope I may assume with some confidence what one of the first Critics of the Age was pleased to declare on reading the former Edition, that the Question is *now* for ever decided.”

The two learned cronies, each influential, and together all-powerful in English literary circles, had ruled our national poet not learned, but ignorant, as compared with his contemporaries.

In the year 1812 died Malone, the first 'big biographer' of the "needy adventurer" from Stratford-upon-Avon as by assumption identical with the actual author of the Shakespeare poems and plays. Malone was well acquainted with Dr. Johnson, and was an "affectionate" friend and frequent correspondent of Dr. Farmer. And we find Sir James Prior, on page 284 of his 'Life of Malone,' quoting a letter from Malone to the Vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon about the poet Shakespeare, written after his edition of the plays and poems came out—and thus after his criticisms of Rowe had been adopted and after he had come to the support of the current belief about Shakspeare of Stratford as the poet with the illogical 'Shake-scene' and Chettle accretions accepted owing to his influence, to the effect that—

"I think I shall be able to overturn every received tradition respecting this very extraordinary man."

Sir James Prior alluding to this passage as a "hint" by Malone of "some essential discovery" in the poet's history.

After all, however, Malone never did anything to overturn the traditions then "received," and that he had done so much to support; and one can but guess what his "essential discovery" may have been.

II

Now it is known through a surviving catalogue that in Dr. Farmer's library was a copy of a Cambridge graduate's work of the year 1595, 'Polimanteia' by W. C.—otherwise (and as some copies stated) William Covell; and that in Covell's essay therein entitled—

'England to Her Three Daughters Cambridge, Oxford, Innes of Court'

is the earliest critical allusion to a poet as a poet named Shakespeare. Moreover it is also known that such essay is an argument about the honour conferred upon their respective universities by the living or recently deceased English writers of acknowledged distinction, poets or otherwise, who had been educated at one or other of the centres of learning specified in the title of the essay.

This allusion to Shakespeare is usually referred to as a marginal note. ~~But this is very misleading indeed as it is an indent note, and thus, not a note easily overlooked, but a note less likely to be overlooked than any interior part of the text itself.~~ Nine lines of the text are set far back, and in the space thus formed are the two or three remarks—

*All praise
worthy
Lucrecia
Sweet Shak-
speare
eloquent
Gaveston.*

It is, for any and every reader of 'Polimanteia,' an unescapable allusion to our national poet; and must have been known to Dr. Farmer, and is sure to have been debated by him with Malone.

Occurring where it does, in a long list of those who had conferred honour upon the universities at which they had been educated, this allusion to the poet Shakespeare of the year 1595 with absolute certainty assumes him to have been an university man.

There is also the point that no university man writing for university men in days Elizabethan, and dealing with authors capable of conferring lustre, would have alluded to a new poet—this was but the second year after Shakespeare's first poem was issued, if aware that he was an actor of tradesfolk parentage—as was the now traditional poet Shakspeare of Stratford.

Here, therefore, in this unescapable indent note in a Cambridge graduate's essay on university-bred authors possessed by Dr. Farmer, may have been Malone's "essential discovery" regarding our national poet.

III

Be that as it may, too, the indent note, with the context, was reprinted in 1810, and thus in Malone's lifetime, in the 'British Bibliographer'—vol. 1, p. 275, with a legitimate expression of surprise that no Shakespearian authority had ever made use of it.

Why did Farmer not make use of it? Why did Malone not make use of it? *And why has no Shakespearian biographer to this very day, Sir Sidney Lee included, dealt with the most important fact that this earliest critical notice of our national poet assumes him to have been a university man?*

QUESTION II

THE BEN JONSON SEMBLANCE OF SUPPRESSION

I

According to all the biographers of Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon as assumedly identical with the poet Shakespeare, the leading witness for the Stratfordian tradition as to our national poet's identity is Ben Jonson. Indeed in Professor Saintsbury's 'Shakespeare: Life and Plays' we are told that—

"The one solid ground on which we can take our stand is supplied by Ben Jonson's famous, but mainly undated, references,"

'Cambridge Hist. of English Lit.,' V, 166,

and that such references, unfortunately not specified, are the "magnetic centre" of all else.

Now in 1599 we find Ben Jonson ridiculing Shakspeare of Stratford. For, as the Rt. Hon. J. M. Robertson, M.P., says in a work praised by Sir Sidney Lee as confuting the Baconians,—

"Ben for his part in 'Every Man Out of his Humour' jeered at Shakespeare's coat of arms, parodying the Non sanz Droicht by the motto Not without Mustard."

'The Baconian Heresy: a Confutation,' p. 561.

It is Ben Jonson's character Sogliardo, who chooses such motto and stands for Shakspeare of Stratford; while Sogliardo is at the outset described as possessed of "land and money" and determined to "be a gentleman whatsoever it cost me," and as a result going to the College of Heralds and purchasing "armes" that are "Of as many Colours as ever you saw any fooles coat in your life" (*Act III, sc. 1*). And it is barely conceivable that Ben Jonson in later years, and after reprinting this offensive parody the very year of the actor's death, could have repeatedly called the same individual "gentle Shakespeare" with complimentary intention.

Further on in the play Sogliardo is made to ask Puntarvolo "How like you the Crest sir?", whereupon Puntarvolo replies that he cannot understand it. And Ben Jonson then puts in the mouth of Sogliardo the explanation—

"Marry sir, it is your Bore without a head Rampant."

Sogliardo is then represented as reading the tricking of his just purchased armorial shield, which runs—

"Gyrony of eight pieces Azure and Gules, between three plates a Chev'ron engrailed Checkey, Or, Vert, and Ermines; on a Chief Argent between two Ann'lets Sables a Bores head Proper,"

whereupon Puntarvolo, asked what he thinks of it all, replies—

"Let the word be Not without mustard, your Crest is very rare sir."

II

Now the paternal or descending coat granted to Sir Nicholas Bacon as that of his ancestors, and that though occasionally quartered with the arms of a wife of an ancestor is alone credited to him by the Pursuivant of Arms John Guillim—see page 101 of his 'Display of Heraldry,' is, as given in the Dethick grant of 1568,—

"The first for Bacon, gules, on a chief silver, two mullets sables"; and as given to-day in 'Debrett's Baronetage'—

"Gules; on a chief Argent two mullets sables."

And, as regards the Crest, in the first instance "a bore^{*} passant ermines"; and, in the second instance, "a Boar passant Ermines."

III

Thus the base of the coat of arms of the Bacon family as granted "for Bacon," and as would be known to Ben Jonson—an expert in heraldry, is described by the one word "Gules." And Ben Jonson arguably enough was contrasting with the learned Francis Bacon and his bare shield base of but one colour, the Sogliardo parody of Shakspeare of Stratford as a character who by way of contrast should have a shield base of "many colours"—for it is in the base the tinctures suggestive of a "fooles coat" were put by him.

As to the remainder of the shield, the Sogliardo chief like the Bacon chief is divided off, the Sogliardo chief like the Bacon chief is tinctured Argent, and the Sogliardo chief like the Bacon chief has among its charges two objects of a kind which if placed singly and centrally between base and chief would be a mark of Cadency. And in the case of the Sogliardo chief these two objects of one kind are Annulets—and thus well calculated to remind the alert alike that an Annulet is the mark of Cadency for a fifth son, and that Francis Bacon had four older brothers named Nicholas and Nathaniel and Edward and Anthony.

Then again, the "Rampant" expression in "it is your Bore without a head Rampant," would certainly have had the right parody touch if used in allusion through a parody to a real Crest properly described as "a Boar passant." And the more so, inasmuch as immediate use is made of the expression as ground for the statement that Sogliardo, otherwise Shakspeare, was "Ramping to Gentilitie."

IV

Many points here are only of the nature of supplementary reasons for suspicion. But Ben Jonson's putting into the mouth of his character representative of Shakspeare of Stratford the declaration that his Crest was the Crest of another armiger *minus* something, "your Bore without a head," coupled with the facts that the missing head is a charge on the shield and that *decapitated* Boar is Bacon and that the crest of Francis Bacon was a Boar, is a quite definite ground for challenge. Strange, therefore, must be accounted the omission of all Shakespearian biographers to deal with this putting by Ben Jonson into the mouth of his character representing Shakspeare of Stratford of an admission that he was using the Crest of another.

V

Moreover, whether taking all these facts into consideration, or only the general fact that in this play of 1599 reprinted parody and all in the year of the actor's death Ben Jonson ridiculed Shakspeare of Strat-

ford, what adequate reason have biographers of Shakspere of Stratford as assumedly identical with the poet Shakespeare for time after time alluding to the testimony of Ben Jonson as a sure foundation for the Stratfordian tradition, without once mentioning in such connection this ridicule of Shakspere of Stratford by Ben Jonson?

Then again, to take an emphasising circumstance, the SUPREME compliment paid by Ben Jonson to the poet Shakespeare in 1623 of having surpassed as a writer all that

“insolent Greece or haughtie Rome”

had written (see ‘To the memory,’ &c.), and *also* paid by Ben Jonson, and paid by him in these identical words, to Francis Bacon at a later date (see ‘Discoveries’), quite clearly should not have been paid to two different contemporaries. Hence the question arises as to how it comes about that no Shakespearian biographers have stressed or even mentioned what, as it stands expressly stated by Ben Jonson in the compliment openly addressed to Francis Bacon that it was “in our tongue” and “our language” that “insolent Greece or haughty Rome” had been surpassed by him, is the most important detail that this could not have applied to what Francis Bacon had written *in his own name*, as Ben Jonson died before Bacon’s philosophical works were translated from Latin into English, and he could not have referred to Bacon’s small book of very short ‘Essays,’ and the by no means extensive and already superseded ‘Advancement of Learning’—rewritten in Latin as two of the nine books of Bacon’s ‘De Augmentis.’

Why have Shakespearian biographers with one consent ignored this second semblance of a wide and elemental fissure, in what they claim as the “solid ground” for the Stratfordian tradition existing in Ben Jonson’s testimony?

QUESTION III

THE LABEO SEMBLANCE OF SUPPRESSION

I

In the year 1598 John Marston, a connection by marriage of Francis Bacon, alluded to the author of ‘Venus and Adonis’ as ‘Labeo.’

Now Joseph Hall, a rival satirist of Puritan upbringing who three or four years later accepted a living in the Church from Francis Bacon’s eldest niece Anne, had just previously referred to ‘Labeo’ as a writer of poetry in “another’s name.” Hence if

we are to judge by appearances Marston referred to the author of 'Venus and Adonis,' to wit the actual poet Shakespeare, not only as the author thereof, but also as knowing him to be said to have written his poetry in "another's name," and as accepting such statement concerning him—for this was a point upon which Marston did not reply to his rival as a satirist.

II

Marston's first volume of poetry came out two months after Hall's last volume of poetry, and the chief poem therein is an imitation of 'Venus and Adonis' called 'The Metamorphosis of Pigmaliions Image.' Attached thereto are some satirical lines entitled 'The Author in prayse of his *precedent Poem*.' And among these appended lines are the eight about to be cited:—

"And in the end, (the end of love I wot)
Pigmalion hath a jolly boy begot.
So *Labeo* did complaine his love was stone,
Obdurate, flinty, so relentless none:
Yet *Lynceus* knows that in the end of this,
He wrought as strange a metamorphosis.
Ends not my Poem, then, surpassing ill?
Come, come *Augustus*, crown my laureat quill."

Here the first two lines about *Labeo* are in the very words of lines 200-1 of 'Venus and Adonis,' which run—

"Art thou obdurate, flinty, hard as steel,
Nay more than flint, for stone at rain relenteth."

And the next two lines by Marston refer to the fact that while *Labeo*'s poem, that is to say Shakespeare's poem, like Marston's poem deals with a metamorphosis—that of dead Adonis into a flower, his (Marston's) story of metamorphosis is the livelier and preferable one. As to the sarcastic "surpassing ill," this would appear to be a hit at his Puritan rival for, after attacking *Labeo* about his earliest poetry, describing him as having done "wondrous well" in later poetry—see Hall's final satire 42 lines from the end.

Nothing is clearer than that 'Labeo' was with Marston a nickname that stood for Shakespeare—the actual poet whatever his identity. And if with Marston, certainly also with Hall; as indeed the various allusions of Hall's satires, if carefully analysed, taken in their totality put beyond reasonable doubt.

III

Hall censured *Labeo* in his first or 1597 volume of poetry, 'Virgidemiarum' book II satire 1, for writing poetry of a kind other than "cleanly." And the satire contains in its fourth line phrase "his handsome drinking bole" a fairly clear allusion to

the motto on the titlepage of 'Venus and Adonis,' in its twentieth line italicised phrase "*Ther's so much labour lost*" a likely enough allusion to the earliest comedy by the author of 'Venus and Adonis,' and in lines 37 to 53 various references to a "black story" by Labeo which would apply well enough to Shakespeare's earliest tragedy 'Titus Andronicus'; the last line of the satire running—

"For shame write cleanly *Labeo*, or write none."

Then, in the very first satire of Hall's second or 1598 volume, 'Virgidemiarum' book IV satire 1, we have the most noteworthy reference to Labeo—

"*Labeo* is whip't and laughs me in the face
Why? for I smite and hide the galled place.
Gird but the Cynicks *Helmet* on his head
Cares he for *Talus*, or his flayle of lead?
Long as the craftie *Cuttle* lieth sure
In the black *Cloud* of his thick vomiture;
Who list complaine of wronged faith or fame
When he may shift it to anothers name?"

"Shift it to anothers name."—to the name of what other person *could* it be shifted? Of a certainty the blame by this Puritan satirist of the author of 'Venus and Adonis' for having written poetry that was not "cleanly," could not be shifted by such author to a friend—for this would not be a friendly action. And just as surely he could not shift it to an enemy—for an enemy would so act as to make matters worse. Thus the only possible explanation would seem to be that Labeo was known to have published his poetry in the name of an agent who in return for cash consideration, or as the result of some other business arrangement, acted as his mask, accepting whatever came along whether of blame or praise.

IV

Taking the whole eight lines of this passage, too, instead of only the last line, nothing to an unprejudiced inquirer can be more evident than that we have here not a single allusion but a *series* of allusions to Labeo, and thus to the author of 'Venus and Adonis,' and hence to the actual author of the Shakespearian poetry, as a writer of such poetry under the name of another person who was only the ostensible poet. For the reason why Labeo by Hall's own admission can "laugh" Hall "in the face"—a sure sign that they were at heart friends, is the fact that he, Labeo, can rely upon Hall keeping the secret—the "galled place" is avowedly *hidden* by the satirist. Then again, Labeo is represented as wearing a "Helmet"—and a Helmet was a recognised symbol of invisibility owing to the classic story about the Helmet of Pluto. Moreover the reference to Labeo as a crafty "Cuttle" fish disguising his presence by a black cloud, is an equally obvious pointing to him as a poet whose real identity was not that actually or apparently

assumed by him in the volumes of poetry he had published. And the concluding allusion to him as one who could not complain of Hall's satire of the year 1597 censuring him, because he, Labeo, could shift such censure to "another's name," is but additional proof that Labeo, to wit the author of 'Venus and Adonis,' is throughout being alluded to as a writer of poetry under a name concealing rather than revealing his identity because the name of another, or so like the name of another as to be certain to be taken as such other individual's name.

Why, then, has this patent fact that the author of 'Venus and Adonis' was referred to by a contemporary satirist as a writer of poetry in "another's name," never been put before the world by Shakespearean biographers?

QUESTION IV

THE MEDIOCRIA FIRMA SEMBLANCE OF SUPPRESSION

I

Marston, the alluder to the author of 'Venus and Adonis' as 'Labeo,' by general admission replied to Hall, the alluder to Labeo as a writer of poetry in "another's name," both in his (Marston's) first volume of poetry and in his second volume, but was obliged to keep back nearly the whole of his reply to Hall's second volume for his own second volume.

Now the only contemporary writer whether of poetry or prose plainly attacked in Hall's first volume (or dwelt upon in his second volume), is the one attacked as Labeo. And Marston, replying in his first volume to Hall's first volume, defends *someone* attacked by Hall, in the line—

"What not *mediocria firma* from thy spight?"

'The Metamorphosis' &c, Sat. IV, line 73.

Whom could Marston have indicated as the person defended, by this use of the Bacon family motto, but some member of that family? Where, if not in this line, is Marston's first volume reply to Hall's first volume attack upon Labeo? *And why have not Shakespearean authorities (two of whom, including a famous biographer of Shakespeare, have edited editions of Marston's poems) pointed out this arguable evidence that Labeo, the writer of poetry in "another's name" who wrote 'Venus and Adonis,' was known to Marston, a connection by marriage of Francis Bacon, as—Francis Bacon?*

QUESTION V

THE SPELLING OF NAME SEMBLANCE OF SUPPRESSION

I

In every biography of the traditional poet Shakespeare, Shakspere of Stratford-upon-Avon, as by general assertion of the authorities and almost general assumption by the instructed public identical with the actual poet Shakespeare, it is taken for granted that when Shakspere of Stratford left Stratford-upon-Avon for London in search of a fortune in 1585 or 1586 or 1587, he left it possessed of a patronymic, or inherited surname, which was sometimes if not always spelt in his native town as the author of 'Venus and Adonis' spelt his publication name in 1593, and again as the author of 'Lucrece' in 1594, and as the publishers of the First Folio and all the contributors of prefatory matter to such famous volume spelt it in 1623; that is to say as SHAKESPEARE.

Now as Malone knew, as Halliwell-Phillipps knew, and as Sir Sidney Lee can but know, this is not the case. There are over three hundred and eighty surviving official Ecclesiastical or Municipal or Legal Stratford-upon-Avon references by name to the traditional poet or his father or their children of earlier date than the issue of 'Venus and Adonis,' including in the more than 380 such references examples of twenty different spellings of their patronymic, and yet not one of the twenty or so different spellings, whether often or seldom occurring, is the spelling invariably adopted as that of the poet's publication name in all the authorised first issues of the Shakespearian poetry.

II

The consequent misunderstanding on the part of 99 people out of every 100, is kept up by our Shakespearian biographers alluding to the traditional poet's grandson as given the baptismal name of SHAKESPEARE after him, although as they all have known the name was entered in the Church Register on baptism as SHAKSPER, and on burial as SHAKSPERE. Also by our Shakespearian biographers alluding to the corpse of the actor as having been entered on burial as that of 'Will: SHAKESPEARE gent.' although it stands entered in the Church Register as that of "Will: SHAKSPERE gent."

III

The matter is no unimportant one. For the actor usually if not always—and many of the greatest authorities have held *always*—signed in the spelling SHAKSPERE. And the spelling SHAKESPEARE, that of the poet's publication name, and a spelling unapplied to the actor or his father at Stratford till after the publi-

cation of 'Venus and Adonis,' permits of two arguable cryptographic explanations for the choice of such a spelling as a mask name like, but not exactly like, that then belonging to the ostensible poet; the one explanation supporting the other explanation. Moreover the same code supplies an explanation in line therewith of the choice of the nickname Labeo by Hall, and an explanation of the most cryptic of the references to Labeo by Marston.

IV

Certainly such cryptographic points were not known to Malone or to Halliwell-Phillipps, and may be presumed not to have been known to Sir Sidney Lee. Let us therefore rule them out as points still to be established, though mention of them is permissible enough—the full details having been offered to authority for consideration and refused consideration. Let us take the bare fact that NOT ONE of the 380 and more surviving Stratford-upon-Avon references to the traditional poet Shakespeare or his father or their children, of earlier date than 'Venus and Adonis,' is in the spelling SHAKESPEARE. Here, quite obviously, is a weak point in the assertion of our Shakespearian biographers that the actor who usually or always signed as SHAKSPERE, was identical with the poet whose poetry was issued in the publication name of SHAKESPEARE.

Why, then, has not a single Shakespearian biographer told the general public of such weak point, and is our tercentenary biography of Shakspeare of Stratford as assumedly identical with the actual poet Shakespeare, despite the 200,000 words wherewith it outmarshals the pre-Malonian biographies by Nicholas Rowe and George Steevens taken together, without even so much as a hint of the existence of the weak point specified?

L'ENVOI

I

In his tercentenary article on the traditional poet Shakespeare a leading literary critic of to-day, the Editor of the 'Fortnightly Review,' one of the staunchest of Stratfordians—as indeed is each and every recognised authority regarding the poet Shakespeare, admitted, concerning Shakspeare of Stratford and the actual writer of the Shakespearian poetry as revealed by such poetry, that—

"The individual and the writer fall apart in an almost absolute antithesis." W. L. Courtney: 'Daily Telegraph,' Ap. 20, 1916.

And about the same time Mr. Thomas Hardy O.M., also a staunch

Stratfordian, declared, in his introduction to the tercentenary 'Book of Homage,' that the traditional poet Shakespeare left—

“ no intimate word or personal trace
Of high design ”

outside his poetry ; —or let us rather say the poetry attributed to him.

II

Quite so. It is what Coleridge and Hallam and Emerson proclaimed before the Bacon-Shakespeare theory was started, and what has always been present to the mind of the writer of these remarks as a student of Elizabethan literature. The creation, and the alleged creator, afford the widest possible contrast.

III

Why, then, the great Taboo in our literary circles of all discussion as to whether there has or has not been a mistake as to the identity of our national poet ? Why, too, the seeming suppression of points of importance whereupon a challenge to the Stratfordian tradition could logically be based ?

IV

Then again, to strike a minor because personal note, why the repeated refusal of the Shakespeare Tercentenary Committee in the autumn of 1915 to consider the results of the author's years of research on the subject of our national poet's identity, although the author was known from his defence of Halliwell-Phillipps in the Stratford Bust controversy in a series of letters to the ' Pall Mall Gazette ' (Nov. 25, Dec. 2, Dec. 9, 1910), and his criticisms of the then President of the Bacon Society in ' Notes and Queries ' (see Jan. 24, Feb. 28, Mar. 14, Apl. 11, and May 2, 1914), to be a fairly well qualified student of Elizabethan literature and neither crank nor partisan ? Why the inability of the author on privately printing and circulating his booklet entitled ' The " Read if thou canst " Epitaph at Stratford upon Avon : a Study in Coincidence ' early in 1919, to come across a single well-known Shakespearian willing to confirm or refute the facts and inferences therein tentatively put forward ? Why the refusal of Sir Sidney Lee to meet the repeated request of the author to, " in the interests of Truth," help him to a definite conclusion by pointing out any faults of fact or logic ? Why the limitation of Sir Sidney Lee's first and only reply, to a remark that no scheme of cryptography " however skilfully devised " is applicable to things Shakespearian ; although the code experimented with is one used in Shakespeare's time, while the coincidences form an aggregation presenting every appearance of marshalment ?

Again and again has this or that or the other authority been approached concerning the general results of the author's investi-

gations as to our national poet's identity. It has even been duly notified to one permanent seat of authority in matters literary that among the results of the author's ten years or more of research in both ordinary and cryptographic directions is absolute proof of the existence of signalling about the poet Shakespeare in the First Folio—absolute proof both in its own obvious value and by the written and signed testimony of *one of the world's most renowned mathematicians*. But, no, a brick wall attitude was maintained. The matter could not be looked into. Even there, however unconsciously, and though perhaps only as an immediate result of red tape, the great Taboo is in full force! And even our publishers so far support the great Taboo as to one after another say that there is 'no money' in any fresh facts of Anti-Stratfordian character, however free from absurdity and partisanship their exposition may be; and therefore, if not also from fear of offending, they can take no risk. Thus nothing can be done—the author being the very reverse of a millionaire!

V

And yet something can be *attempted*—by means of a direct if necessarily brief appeal against the great Taboo. Here, therefore, is such an appeal. For of a surety the author cannot be the only lover of Shakespeare who seeks certitude as to the poet's identity, and who desires on such nowadays often challenged point an adherence in the spirit, as well as in the letter, to that glorious maxim of literary men as well as lawyers, adapted from the seventh Senecan tragedy, which is the first principle of fair play.

VI

In the name of fair play then, aye, and in the name of "friendly Shakespeare" himself, let us have done with all branding of Anti-Stratfordianism and Anti-Stratfordians as "perverse" ('Dictionary of National Biography,' 1897, and tercentenary biography, 1916), without "rational ground for dispute" ('Times,' March 30, 1898), and with "no rational right to a hearing" ('Life of William Shakespeare,' 1908). Some manifestations of Anti-Stratfordianism and some Anti-Stratfordians deserve branding no doubt, and branding deeply; but what shall be said of the great Taboo these hundred years and more, now more patent and potent than ever, that has led to the breeding of the worst features of the opposition to the Stratfordian tradition? Has all the 'perversity' been on one side? And, to go beyond our attention, as followers (so far as may be) of authority, to the pronouncements of our generalissimo, and to attend also to a notable pronouncement by a named collaborator in a signed review of an Anti-Stratfordian work by a well-known university man, "We utterly decline to do them the compliment of recognising that they have a *primâ facie* case" ('Bookman,' August 1903), why, as the actor was the son of provincial

tradesfolk *neither* of whom could write, all the *a priori* element inherent in such admitted fact is against the tradition, while the very evidence herewith shown to have been kept in the background by Stratfordian scholars of itself constitutes a strong *primâ facie* case for Anti-Stratfordians, even if no more.

VII

Or take the tercentenary 'Book of Homage,' and its solicited homage for him who least of all Englishmen who ever lived was in need of solicited homage, and its one and only reference to Anti-Stratfordians—none of whom though equally lovers of the actual poet Shakespeare would appear to have been asked to contribute: "Of Baconians and other enemies of 'the Stratford' who need talk?—do they not one and all bear on their arms the badge of Moria?" (p. 139). Speaks even there the true Master, willing ever to help the ignorant and doubting inquirer? Or is the 'voice authentic' to be found in that silencing high-Toryism which for generations past has kept debate as to our national poet's identity out of the agenda of all Shakespeare Associations and Societies?

VIII

All-triumphant is the great Taboo. But away with it! A thing of darkness raised by obscurantists, it must be fought; and a Crusade is hereby proclaimed against it. Is such Crusade to be a Crusade limited to one—for the call is only to those who, like the author, are non-partisan inquirers? Let authority itself act! And let us have everything of the nature of admissible evidence and criticism in any way touching the question of our national poet's identity at long last freely discussed in open court by those best acquainted with things Elizabethan, and the tremendous power of authority in all its many ramifications no longer either directly or indirectly set against letting in the light upon the chief problem of English literature.

FINIS.

SIR SIDNEY LEE & ABSOLUTE PROOF

BEING THE CASE FOR AN EXHAUSTIVE INQUIRY AS TO
THE FULL EXTENT, AND CORRECT INTERPRETATION,
OF THE SUB-SURFACE SIGNALLING ABOUT THE POET
SHAKESPEARE SHOWN BY THE AUTHOR'S FOUR
LETTERS IN 'THE ATHENÆUM' TO HAVE
COME DOWN TO US ON AT LEAST
ONE PAGE OF THE FIRST FOLIO

BY

J. DENHAM PARSONS

*Author of 'The Nature and Purpose of the Universe'; 'Moto, Forma e Spontaneità'—
a series of articles on philosophy contributed to an Italian review; 'The
"Read if thou canst" Epitaph at Stratford-upon-Avon';
'The Great Taboo in English Literary
Circles'; &c.*

L O N D O N

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR, AT
45, SUTTON PARK ROAD, CHISWICK

1920

SIR SIDNEY LEE and ABSOLUTE PROOF

I

Absolute proof that sub-surface signalling has come down the centuries to us in the earliest collective edition of the plays ascribed to William Shakespeare—the First Folio of A.D. 1623, was discovered by the present writer in the year 1910, in the shape of a set of word numerical value coincidences found by him in the commendatory poem initialled "I.M." And the discovery, vouched for as a discovery of genuine cryptography by mathematicians of the very highest rank, had, and has, some importance; inasmuch as sub-surface signalling in the prefatory matter of the First Folio could hardly be other than, or than a part of, some hint, or more than hint, of a masked authorship, and as to the identity of the true author. Moreover, given sub-surface signalling to such effect in one place, likely enough there would be sub-surface signalling to the same effect in other places also.

II

In 1915 the author, a member of the Shakespeare Association at the time, wrote to the Shakespeare Tercentenary Committee urging that its members should consider this absolute proof of the existence of sub-surface signalling in the First Folio; as also a proof, almost simultaneously discovered by the author, that the poet Shakespeare's contemporaries John Marston and Joseph Hall alluded to the actual poet as a writer of poetry in a name concealing his identity—Marston referring to the author of 'Venus and Adonis' as Labeo (see 'The Metamorphosis, &c. The Author in prayse') after Hall had referred to Labeo as writing his poetry in "another's name" (see 'Virgidemiarum,' iv, 1). A notification of the Committee's refusal to consider such absolute proof of the existence of sub-surface signalling in the First Folio, and such "another's name" evidence, however,

was received from Professor I. Gollancz. An appeal to the Chairman, the Earl of Plymouth, resulted in another refusal. A request for the names and addresses of the Committee, so that some details of the fresh facts might be sent to them by post, was also twice refused. And a special appeal from these decisions of the Secretary and the Chairman to Sir Sidney Lee—as without doubt the most influential member of the Committee, led but to confirmation thereof.

Three years or so later the author issued a pamphlet showing the existence of sub-surface signalling in the inscription on the mural monument to the traditional poet Shakespeare, and asked not only Sir Sidney Lee, but also the Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum, to consider it, in addition to the said absolute proof of the existence of sub-surface signalling in the First Folio. But again, only refusals came to hand.

In 1919 the author at last obtained the names and addresses of the members of the Shakespeare Tercentenary Committee, and sent round to them a pamphlet of protest entitled 'The Great Taboo in English Literary Circles.' This took the form of a series of questions to Sir Sidney Lee on the subject of arguable suppressions of unwelcome Shakespeare evidence during the last two hundred years. Incidentally the central points of the "another's name" evidence were presented—though none of the many and weighty other reasons for holding 'Labeo' to have stood for the poet Shakespeare. And there was a passing reference to the I.M. poem set of coincidences as presenting absolute proof of the existence of sub-surface signalling in the First Folio "both in its own obvious value and by the written and signed testimony of one of the world's most renowned mathematicians." But Sir Sidney Lee's only answer, apart from saying that his copy of the pamphlet had come to hand, consisted of the single sentence—"I do not see how your conclusions follow from your premisses."

Early in January 1920 the author wrote letters to each of the three chief officials of Oxford University, enclosing two pamphlets and details of the absolute proof of the existence of sub-surface signalling in the First Folio, and very respectfully challenging the University to show such proof not to be absolute. The Vice-Chancellor replied that though, as stated, now owner and publisher of the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' the University disclaimed any responsibility as regards its account of the poet Shakespeare.

Letters presenting by degrees the particulars of such portion of the I.M. commendatory poem set of coincidences as is arrived at without the help of any interpretative theory of mistaken identity regarding the poet Shakespeare, were then sent by the

author to 'The Athenæum,' and appeared in the issues for February 6, March 5, March 12, and April 30 ; the testimony of Professor A. R. Forsyth, F.R.S., Chief Professor of Mathematics at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, to the effect that the single coincidence submitted to him of itself contains absolute proof of sub-surface signalling, being given in the letter published in that journal on March 5th.

In the letter inserted on March 12th the author was allowed to state that he could supply a "tentative completion of the cryptogram." In a letter from the editor of 'The Athenæum' dated April 26, the insertion of such "tentative completion" was definitely promised ; and it was at once forwarded. In a letter dated June 8, 1920, the editor wrote refusing to insert the tentative completion ; after having had it before him for just forty days.

III

No comment by any known Shakespearian upon any of the author's four inserted letters, had appeared in 'The Athenæum.' But under date March 29, 1920, and addressing "Dear Mr. Denham Parsons," Sir Sidney Lee had written direct to the author, promising to consult Professor Forsyth about the set of coincidences published in that journal. Two subsequent inquiries by the author as to the result of the consultation, were, however, ignored by Sir Sidney Lee. And in the 'Morning Post' of April 24 the author was astonished to gather from the remarks of its Special Correspondent at Stratford upon Avon, under the heading "A New Cryptogram," that Sir Sidney Lee had, while still under promise to consult Professor Forsyth and without reporting the result of any consultation, attacked the author's letters to 'The Athenæum,' in a St. George's Day address at the Town Hall of Stratford upon Avon. How the attack was worded, had, however, to be guessed ; the 'Morning Post' representative saying little more than that the "new cryptogram" was described by Sir Sidney Lee as warning those who mastered it "against associating the writer of the plays with Stratford. But while cautioning one against Short it mentions no Codlin."

The author at once wrote to Sir Sidney Lee asking him to say upon precisely what grounds he had attacked a discoverer whose discovery was still unreported upon after proper submission, and (for a third time) if he would kindly make known the result of his consultation about the discovery with Professor Forsyth. But no reply came to hand. And on finding that the 'Stratford upon Avon Herald' for April 30 contained a long report of the address, yet no mention of the attack, he made inquiries

of two Warwickshire friends ; both of whom advised him that the passage attacking him had been kept out of the report at Sir Sidney Lee's special request—other details learned being that the author's pamphlet 'The Great Taboo,' the questions put to Sir Sidney in which he had six months before written refusing to answer, was stated by him to have been issued as a "reward" for his "coolness" with respect to the proof of sub-surface signalling in the First Folio, and that the author's cryptogram discovery was the one and only thing specified by Sir Sidney Lee among the things roundly denounced by him in Stratford upon Avon Town Hall as opposition to the Stratfordian tradition of a kind that is "most fallacious" and hurtful to any reputation "for sanity."

Not wishing to shine as the only individual specified in a class so denounced, nor even to be included by 'accepted authority' in such a class, the author sent a letter to the 'Stratford upon Avon Herald,' appearing in the issue for May 14, in which he asked Sir Sidney Lee to give in that journal the exact terms of the attack, so that he could answer it, and that those who had heard the attack might know the answer. But Sir Sidney Lee replied privately only, and only to the effect that he had "not been adequately reported" (a queer way of alluding to the suppression of a passage owing to his request), and that his "warning was a very general one" (which avoids the point that the author was the only individual particularised). The requested exact terms of the attack were not given, and for the fourth time a request of the author for the result of the consultation about the cryptogram with Professor Forsyth was ignored.

A stronger protest from the author was then kindly inserted by the editor of the 'Stratford upon Avon Herald,' and then one stronger still—see issues for May 28 and June 11. But Sir Sidney Lee made no move. The terms of his attack were to remain suppressed, and the result of his consultation with Professor Forsyth uncommunicated.

IV

So stands the matter of the reception by the accepted authorities on the poet Shakespeare of the author's fresh facts affecting the problem of the poet's identity, if it be added that the author's two first letters to the 'Herald' reminded Sir Sidney Lee that he had never met the point that Marston alluded to Labeo as the author of 'Venus and Adonis' after Hall alluded to Labeo as a writer of poetry in "another's name." And if it be also added that on April 4 Professor Saintsbury, and on April 5 the Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum,

wrote declining, despite Professor Forsyth's testimony regarding an involved coincidence that it must have been purposely arranged, to consider the cryptogram discovered in I.M.'s poem. And also that on May 30 Sir Israel Gollancz wrote notifying the refusal of the Shakespeare Association to look into the coincidences set forth in 'The Athenæum.'

V

What, then, is this absolute proof of the existence of sub-surface signalling in the First Folio which 'The Athenæum' has published for the author, but that quite obviously is only part of a cryptogram, and the author's tentative completion and interpretation of which is denied insertion—despite both the custom when so much of a discoverer's report has been inserted, and the editor's written promise?

Let us first take the already published part of the cryptogram, being so much of the cryptogram as is arrived at without the aid of any theory of mistaken identity regarding the poet Shakespeare.

Now if any sub-surface signalling about the poet Shakespeare has come down to us from his age, the two most likely places for finding any of it could most reasonably be held to be, (1) the ten line poem put by Ben Jonson even before the title page of the First Folio, (2) the eight line poem which in properly bound copies of the First Folio is the piece of literature placed next before the plays.

This eight line poem, initialled "I.M.," has the same number of lines that a chess-board has rows of squares. And the play placed just after it, is the only one mentioning the game of Chess. But some lines of the poem contain less words than the number of squares in a chess-board row of squares. Hence any sub-surface signalling in this poem about the poet Shakespeare should be found connected with, or accommodated to, the arrangement of squares upon a chess-board. But, as there are insufficient words to cover the squares of a full board, most probably to the arrangement of squares upon *half* a chess-board.

There are 32 squares upon half a chess-board. And the cross sum (or digit addition total) of the *positional* numbers of such squares, 1—32, is 177. Now this is the equivalent of William Shakespeare, the poet's publication name—but not the actor's usual signature, by the *positional* letter-number code of the Elizabethans—for as can be seen from Swan's 'Speculum Mundi' note in A.D. 1635 about A.D. 1578, they used

the A=1 to Z=24 code, with both I and J allotted the position and value 9 and both U and V allotted the position and value 20. Hence it is arguable that *the spelling of the poet's publication name, as a variation of the surname of the actor, was fixed upon with a view to cryptography.*

Here is the poem in its original spelling :

“ WEE wondred (*Shake-speare*) that thou went'st so soone
 From the Worlds-Stage to the Graves-Tyring-roome.
 Wee thought thee dead, but this thy printed worth,
 Tels thy Spectators, that thou went'st but forth
 To enter with applause. An Actors Art,
 Can dye, and live, to acte a second part.
 That's but an *Exit* of Mortalitie ;
 This, a Re-entrance to a Plaudite.”

As we cannot cover the 64 squares of a chess-board with words from the poem, let us supposedly cover the 32 squares of *half* a chess-board therewith. This means taking the first four columns of words. And at once we find that there are two alternative first four columns of words, there being the option of taking the double noun “ Worlds-Stage ” as one word or two words. Our first experiment, however, as this double noun is not in any lexicon of the time, clearly should regard it as two words. And we thus get as our operating area the representative word numerical values—

31	78	103	47
49	32	85	50
31	95	37	14
<hr/>			
53	50	129	47
33	59	57	86
17	32	18	45
65	41	14	55
54	1	98	33

the three top rows being marked off, in appearance, for some purpose or other, by the repetition of “ WEE,” the first word of the first line, as also the first word of the third line.

Now for an analysis of the figures of these word numerical values supposedly occupying the 32 squares of half a chess-board, an area that we have found suggestive of the poet Shakespeare's publication name. The cross-sum or *digit addition total*, which of necessity is greater than that of the positional numbers of the squares (1 to 32=177=William Shakespeare), is 280. If any signalling be about, then we should find a signal by deducting the one cross sum from the other. And the difference is 103—the equivalent of ‘ Shakespeare.’

Then again, if there be any signalling about, this cross-sum of 280 could, and therefore should, be divided in the manner mentioned as regards the three top arguably marked off rows and the five other rows. And this is so, the cross-sum for the three top rows being 103 (=Shakespeare), and for the five bottom rows 177 (=William Shakespeare).

Moreover, as the values are supposed to occupy the squares of half a chess-board, then, if there be any signalling about, there could and therefore should be a similar *colour of square* division of the cross-sum of 280 ; taking all eight rows together. And this is actually so, the cross-sum of the values on white squares being 103 (=Shakespeare), and the cross-sum of the values on black squares 177 (=William Shakespeare).

This last coincidence, without mention of the equivalents of 103 and 177, and presented merely as a possible three centuries old cross-sum signal of 280 with a compartmental division as three top rows 103 five bottom rows 177 which is duplicated by a 103 and 177 colour of square division for all eight rows taken together, was years ago submitted by the author to Professor A. R. Forsyth, F.R.S., the Chief Professor of Mathematics at the Imperial College of Science and Technology. And the author received a kind reply which, after some introductory remarks, ran as follows—

“ I have thought enough to see that the chances against the mere chance would be multitudinously overwhelming. . . . But now for a more important suggestion to you. The impression left upon me is that you are in the presence of one of those cryptograms so dear to some minds through many ages.

Yours sincerely,

A. R. FORSYTH.”

In thanking the Professor the author mentioned that a seeming cryptogram, or portion of one, in the shape of initials, had some years before been observed by him in the same operating area ; and asked if the pronouncement “ multitudinously overwhelming ” ruled mere chance quite out of court as the origin of the colour of square duplication coincidence that had been submitted. And Professor Forsyth explained in a second letter that he had meant that the chance of such a cross-sum coincidence occurring by chance, was—

“ absolutely negligible from the point of view of human judgment or human estimate ” ;

and in a third letter very kindly supplied an algebraical statement of the problem.

and in I M. poem: "The chances against 'chance' would be multitudinously overwhelming". Forsyth in Book III also p. 9 = about 1 chance against 30,000.

As to the original figuring out of the cryptogram as a thing of shape as well as a set of equivalents, the author had reflected that any series of signals in an eight line poem would almost certainly have been made to take the shape of a letter, or more probably two letters—as someone's initials. Also that in such case the arguably marked off three top rows, should be found to be the *head* of the letter, or first initial.

The wholly logical rule that all loops as well as strokes of letters should, when figured out by words or their numerical values arranged on squares like those of a chess-board, be of the same thickness throughout, then showed that the only letters with a three row deep head, possible in the total depth of but eight rows, would be an F or a T. And further reflection showed that a three row deep head is unlikely to have been pitched upon for a T, as the extension from the starting point of the head would only touch the exterior of the operating area at the very finish. Hence one is logically driven to experiment first with an F.

Here is such F with a three top row head, together with the outside word numerical values of the operating area—

31	78	103	47	31	78	103	47
49	32	85	50	49			50
31	95	37	14	31			14
53				53			47
33	59	57		33			86
17				17			45
65				65			55
54				54	1	98	33

Analysis of the supposed initial and its frame, showed that each has a total word numerical value of 990. Also that in each case the *colour of square* division of the values totalling 990 is the same, 551 black and 439 white, when the values are arranged on a chess-board—which logically should mean a signal by the double difference of 112 as well as by the double total of 990.

So far and no further would 'The Athenæum' publish the author's discovery in the shortest poem of the First Folio pre-fatory matter—that is to say only to the extent that there is no use of any mistaken identity theory regarding the poet Shakespeare as an arguable mode of completion and interpretation. But here, in the coincidences presented in the author's letters to 'The Athenæum' of Feb. 6, March 5-12, and April 30, 1920, everyone arrived at without the use of any mistaken identity theory, is absolute proof of the existence of sub-surface signalling in the First Folio. Moreover, incidental to the entirely non-partisan exposition of such absolute proof is a most

striking arguability that the spelling of the poet's publication name, the difference of which from that of the actor's usual signature has never been satisfactorily explained, was fixed upon with a view to cryptography—as having a numerical value, 177, thrice that of CONCEALED (=59), and exactly equal to the cross-sum of the positional numbers, 1 to 32, of the squares of half a chess-board. For some reason, perhaps the powerful influence of Professors Lee and Saintsbury, the matter was to be closed down, half way, without discussion; Professor Forsyth's testimony notwithstanding.

VI

As to the 'tentative completion of the cryptogram' which was refused insertion in 'The Athenæum,' the author, as he said in its concluding paragraph, would be most happy to substitute any *better* completion. It is simply the best that he, as the discoverer of the set of coincidences already set forth, and all of which were arrived at without the use of any theory of mistaken identity regarding the poet Shakespeare, can without help suggest as apparently the completion and interpretation arranged by I.M. And it runs as follows.

Neither the numerical value of the name of the central figure of the Earl of Derby theory—William Stanley, nor that of the name of the central figure of the Earl of Rutland theory—Roger Manners, will, when applied to the set of coincidences in I.M.'s poem shown to have been arrived at without the use of any theory of mistaken identity regarding Shakespeare, and to be (as Professor Forsyth has said of one of the set) the result of purposed arrangement, help us to any further and connected series of coincidences. But on applying thereto the numerical value of the name Francis (=67) Bacon (=33), a logically arguable completion of the cryptogram, and interpretation thereof, is at once observable.

To begin with, the doubly signalled 990 is the numerical value, 33, of the surname Bacon, multiplied by the 30 years, 1593 to 1623, that the name William Shakespeare, not the spelling usually if ever adopted in the actor's signatures, had been in use as the publication name of the poet. And another 30 years suggesting coincidence exists—see end of appendix.

As to the doubly signalled colour of square difference of 112 with regard to the composition of each 990, this is the equivalent of 'Concealed Poet.'

Take also the diagonals in the marked off three top rows. The first is $31+32+37$ from the value representing the opening word of the poem, giving an arguable 'key' diagonal signal of

100—the equivalent of Francis (=67) Bacon (=33). And the second is $78+85+14$ from the value representing the second word of the poem, giving an arguable companion diagonal signal of 177—the equivalent of William (=74) Shakespeare (=103).

Moreover the outside columns of the marked off three top rows or head of the F, $31+49+31$ and $47+50+14$, *both* total 111—the equivalent of Lord St Alban. And the full stem of the F totals 333, or thrice the equivalent of Lord St Alban, with a coincidental division as 111—222 at the required spot.

Lastly, as to the cross-bar of the F, its product, $33 \times 59 \times 57$ or 110979, is a double exact multiple of the Bacon (=33) and William Shakespeare (=177) equivalents; each equivalent being contained an exact number of times.

Thus our tentative interpretation of the F arrived at without the use of any mistaken identity theory regarding the poet Shakespeare, may be said to suggest that we should be able, by means of the interpreting theory, to find an accompanying B; and so complete the cryptogram.

VII

For the figuring out of any associated B so as to get the signal of F.B. as the initials of Francis Bacon, the cryptographer must, owing to the positional digit addition total equivalence of the 32 words or squares of the first four columns—*i.e.* 1 to $32=177$ —William Shakespeare, be supposed to have wanted, not a *second* four columns of words, but an *alternative first* four columns of words. And it is not the likely thing, but this unlikely thing, which exists; the option of taking the monstrous double noun “Worlds-Stage” either as two words or as one word, giving us, as the next word is “to” (=33), the alternative sets of numerical values for the first four columns of words—

“Worlds-Stage” as two words. “Worlds-Stage” as one word.

31	78	103	47	31	78	103	47
49	32	85	50	49	32	135	33
31	95	37	14	31	95	37	14
<hr/>				<hr/>			
53	50	129	47	53	50	129	47
33	59	57	86	33	59	57	86
17	32	18	45	17	32	18	45
65	41	14	55	65	41	14	55
54	1	98	33	54	1	98	33

Now in signalling F.B. on a couple of alternative sets of word numerical values, a clever cryptographer could signal it in duplicate. And as there is no one middle row in eight rows,

the central bar of the B clearly should be found *either* at the bottom row, value 177—the equivalent of William Shakespeare, of the marked off three top rows ; *or* at the fifth row, where is the only first word of line that is an equivalent of Bacon (=33).

We thus have as the alternative F's—

“ *Worlds-Stage* ” as two words. “ *Worlds-Stage* ” as one word.

31	78	103	47	31	78	103	47
49	32	85	50	49	32	135	33
31	95	37	14	31	95	37	14
53				53			
33	59	57		33	59	57	
17				17			
65				65			
54				54			

And as the alternative B's—

31	78	103	47	31	78	103	47
49			50	49			33
31	95	37	14	31			14
53			47	53			47
33			86	33	59	57	86
17			45	17			45
65			55	65			55
54	1	98	33	54	1	98	33

Analysis shows that the total numerical values are—

“ *Worlds-Stage* ” as two words. “ *Worlds-Stage* ” as one word.

F = 990 or 33×30

F = 1023 or 33×31

B = 1122 or 33×34

B = 1089 or 33×33

Thus each of the four letters has a value which is an exact multiple of the equivalent of Bacon (=33), while the final B has a value which is the mathematical *power* of such equivalent. And each complete F.B. has a value which is the Bacon equivalent multiplied by 64—the number of squares on a chess-board.

As to the diagonals in the marked off three top rows from “ WEE ” to “ Wee ” or head of the F's, while the ‘ key ’ diagonal from the value representing the opening word of the poem, which in the F arrived at without the use of any mistaken identity theory is $31+32+37$ or 100—the equivalent of Francis Bacon, remains such equivalent on the “ *Worlds-Stage* ” = one word basis, the accompanying diagonal alters from an equivalent of William Shakespeare to $78+135+14$ or 227—the equivalent of Bacon's full title Lord Viscount St Alban.

It is also worthy of note that the cross-sum for the head of the F or marked off three top rows changes from 103—the equivalent of Shakespeare, to 100—the equivalent of Francis Bacon.

Moreover, as on the "Worlds-Stage" = two words basis the digit addition total for all eight rows of word numerical values has been found to be 280, 103 for the marked off rows and 177 for the five bottom rows, we thus have for all eight rows an alternation *from* a Shakespeare equivalent crowning a William Shakespeare equivalent, *to* a Francis Bacon equivalent crowning a William Shakespeare equivalent.

Nor are *colour of square* coincidences limited to one basis. For on reflecting that I.M. could have arranged for this cross-sum crown of 100 = Francis Bacon to have been to the extent of 67 (= Francis) on one colour of square, and to the extent of 33 (= Bacon) on the other colour of square, we make experiment but to find that matters actually *are* so arranged.

There remains the general point that only one word in this First Folio poem besides the bracketed name "(Shake-speare)," is in the *same type* as such name, *viz.* "Exit" (= 55); and that what thus should be the special signal 55, is the cross-sum of $F_6R_{17}A_1N_{13}C_3I_9S_{18}B_2A_1C_3O_{14}N_{13}$ —as can be seen by adding the digits together.

VIII

Such was the 'tentative completion' of the I.M. poem cryptogram, as in its so far published state an obviously incomplete arrangement discovered without the use of any theory of mistaken identity regarding the poet Shakespeare but as obviously needing some such theory for its completion and interpretation as a discovery, which the author sent to 'The Athenæum' on April 29, 1920; save that two of the coincidences were not mentioned to the editor till a later date.

* Any idea that the author set out on his researches intending to find something that would favour the Bacon-Shakespeare theory, may be dismissed; for although never a ridiculer of the theory itself, what was known to him of the literature favouring it repelled him, while the Stanley and Manners theories were given just as good a chance. He has simply in a scientific spirit looked out for fresh facts in all directions, and then tried to secure justice for those found. And he has now but to record the reason given by the editor of 'The Athenæum' for going back upon his written promise, and even upon literary precedent when half of a discoverer's account of his discovery has been inserted, in refusing to insert his tentative completion and interpretation.

It was this. The editor was of opinion that the author should, with his 'tentative completion'—of what obviously (and by Professor Forsyth's testimony as an expert) presents

to the world absolute proof of the existence of sub-surface signalling, have supplied "exhaustive verification" of his assumption that the "results could not be obtained from other material."

They could not. The set of coincidences is a quite unmatchable set of coincidences. Moreover, as a set of coincidences connecting the poet Shakespeare and the chess-board, *it is in the one and only appropriate place in all the world.* And the editor's request for the impossible, in the shape of proof of a negative, notwithstanding, the facts remain (1) that the portion of the I.M. poem cryptogram published for the author in 'The Athenæum' is arrived at without the use of any theory of mistaken identity regarding the poet Shakespeare, (2) that such portion of itself presents absolute proof of the existence of sub-surface signalling in the First Folio, and (3) that whatever may be thought of the author's tentative completion and interpretation, the question of the full extent and true signification of the sub-surface signalling to be found in the First Folio should not be evaded.

FINIS.

NOTE.—The author's earliest Shakespeare pamphlet 'The "Read if thou canst" Epitaph at Stratford upon Avon,' now out of print, supplies clear evidence of the existence of sub-surface signalling in the chiselled inscription on the mural monument to the traditional poet, in the shape of *root-digit* coincidences pointed to by the gross mis-spelling SIEH (for SITH); by 'root' digit, meaning that all double figure values are reduced to digits, like 18 to 9 and 19 to 1. For instance, the root digit addition total for the numerical values of all words or contractions of words is 404, or $177+227$; while of all words to the end of the fourth line (*i.e.* to and including "plast") it is 177, followed by 227 for the remainder (*i.e.* to and including the final "Ap."); and of all words of the challenging or English section down to and including the *filum labyrinthi* "SIEH" it is 227, preceded by 66 for the Latin section and followed by 111—and so confirming the 33 for the first line, 33 for the second line, and 111 for next two lines, of the 177 for all words to end of fourth line: *three* obviously arranged signals of 177 and 227 capable of the interpretation William Shakespeare (=177) Lord Viscount St Alban (=227), reminding one of the diagonal alternation of 177 and 227 in the I.M. poem cryptogram, and significantly supported by a *fourth* epitaph example in the fact that the root digit addition total for all the letter numerical values taken separately is 1466, which is $177 \times 7 + 227$. And there is the related coincidence that while the root digit total for the separate letter values of the top line of all—the first

-E-H. Is intentional¹³: It is. It is a form of verb "to see", in German. The sum of the 4 letter values is 53, which is the same as "T-O-P-I-C" "T-O-P-I-C"

of the two lines of Latin, is 177—the equivalent of William Shakespeare, the total for the whole of the Latin is 327—the equivalent of Francis Bacon (=100) Lord Viscount St Alban (=227). This pamphlet was reviewed in 'The Athenæum' when the author's first letter to that journal about the I.M. cryptogram appeared therein—Feb. 6th, 1920, and the coincidences put forward admitted to exist.

Appended to the present pamphlet, is a report of the results of an inquiry as to how far the author's tentative completion of the I.M. cryptogram is supported by more or less similar coincidences in other good positions for any sub-surface signalling about the poet Shakespeare. It consists of pages 5 to 15 of, ten copies apart, an otherwise unissued pamphlet entitled 'Ben Jonson and Sir Sidney Lee.' Upon page 11 are several slips needing correction—"letters" on lines 4 and 6 should be 'words,' "is the 153rd" on line 14 should be 'is at the end of the 153rd,' and "letter" on line 15 should be 'word.'

BEN JONSON AND SIR SIDNEY LEE

I

It has been officially admitted, in a signed note held by the present writer, and incidentally confirming the results of his researches upon such point, that although there survive over 380 Stratford-upon-Avon references by name to the traditional poet Shakespeare or his father which are of earlier date than the publication of 'Venus and Adonis'—and thus of earlier date than the first reference to a poet as a poet named 'William Shakespeare,' not one of those 380 and more references are in the spelling of the poet's publication name. So far as his patronymic was concerned, it was as a William 'Twenty-Spellings' that the traditional poet Shakespeare left Stratford upon Avon in 1585 or 1586 or 1587; and *not one* of the twenty local ways of spelling his inherited surname was S.H.A.K.E.S.P.E.A.R.E. Moreover his son was afterwards entered in the burial register as named Shaksper, his daughter in the marriage register as named Shaksper, himself in the burial register as named Shaksper, and his grandson in the baptism register as named Shaksper and in the burial register as named Shaksper.

The account of Shaksper of Stratford as assumedly identical with the poet Shakespeare that the 'Dictionary of National Biography' puts before the world, manages to give a totally different impression. And as in yet other directions also our popular identifications of Shaksper of Stratford with the poet Shakespeare are more or less open to the charge of being exhibitions of advocacy on behalf of a none too surely founded tradition, there arises for all non-partisan students of Elizabethan literature the question as to whether there be any considerable amount of evidence available on behalf of a contention that even Ben Jonson's allusion to the poet as the "Sweet Swan of Avon" may have been mere *camouflage*, and that from the very beginning what has passed as orthodoxy regarding the poet Shakespeare has been something very different indeed.

II

The last seventy years have seen three definite challenges of mistaken identity as regards the generally accepted or 'Swan of Avon' theory as to the identity of the poet Shakespeare;

(1) that of Mr. W. H. Smith of Brompton in 1856 to the effect that Francis Bacon Viscount St Alban was the true author of the Shakespeare poems and plays, (2) that of Mr. J. H. Greenstreet in 1891 to the effect that William Stanley Earl of Derby was the true author, and (3) that of Herr Carl Bleibtreu in 1907 to the effect that Roger Manners Earl of Rutland was the true author. And if Ben Jonson's allusion to the poet Shakespeare as the "Sweet Swan of Avon" was mere camouflage, there should be discoverable in the same volume—the First Folio, open signals of the initials and surname terminals of one or other of these contemporaries of Ben Jonson; open signals that should prove to be clues to sub-surface signalling. For the age of Shakespeare was an age of Cryptography.

III

There is no arguable appearance in the First Folio of open signals by way of the Roger Manners initials and surname terminals R.M. and M.S. And none of open signals by way of the William Stanley initials and surname terminals W.S. and S.Y. But as regards the Francis Bacon initials and surname terminals F.B. and B.N. the same cannot correctly be said. For Ben Jonson began the First Folio even before its title-page, and so began it in lines printed thus :

" This Figure that thou here seest put,
It was for gentle Shakespeare cut ;
Wherein the Graver had a strife
with Nature, to out-doo the life :
O, could he but have drawne his wit
As well in brasse, as he hath hit
His face, the Print would then surpasse
All, that was ever writ in brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke."

IV

A fair preliminary report, after a first view examination of these lines with reference to the possibility of open or concealed signalling therein by Ben Jonson regarding the authorship of the collection of plays presented in the volume, would be to the effect that no better vehicle of cryptography about a masked authorship could exist than ten lines of editorial verse placed even before the title-page. And to the further effect that there is an open authorship claim in the last two words, " his Booke," which with almost absolute certainty would include the summation of a concealed claim about the authorship were there any cryptography about the true author to be found in this introductory poem.

V

The pivotal or claimative "his" of this *open* authorship claim "his Booke" prefixed by Ben Jonson to the First Folio, is the 67th word of his introduction counting all words, but the 33rd word counting only the words on the indented lines like that on which the word occurs. And if there be any cryptography anywhere in the introduction, there should be discoverable some letter numerical value code of the period according to which 67 is the numerical value of one of the two names of the true author, while 33 is the numerical value of his other name.

It is therefore noteworthy that according to the "naturall position in the alphabet or crosse row" code, a code utilised in Elizabethan England in connection with a prophecy that the world would come to an end in the year 1578 and allotting both I and J the value 9 and both U and V the value 20, 67 is the equivalent of 'Francis,' while 33 is the equivalent of 'Bacon.'

VI

Of any outstanding R.M. or M.S. for Roger Manners, there is no arguable sign. And of any outstanding W.S. or S.Y. for William Stanley there is no arguable sign. But the last possible *capital* letter, the initial of the last word, is both a capital and a B, while, as the fifth letter from the end, it is balanced by a capital F as the fifth letter from the beginning; making an arguable initialling of the whole poem with the initials of Francis Bacon, F.B.

Moreover the initial letters of the last two lines are, in such order, B.N.; the terminals of the surname Bacon. And on spelling out 'Bacon' beginning with the B of such B.N., the speller ends on the N of such B.N.; whether starting forward on the same line and back on the next, or starting upward and round on all the outside letters of the poem.

VII

Now in the event of any major signal by the number of words—and a separate signal of the Francis and Bacon equivalents by the penultimate word would be a major signal, there should be a minor signal by the number of letters. And the total number of letters in Ben Jonson's ten introductory lines is 272—the equivalent of 'Francis Bacon the true author' ($67+33+32+61+79$).

Moreover as the Bacon family motto was about the safety of the *middle position*, there might well be middle or half way signals of a confirmatory character if any signalling at all about Francis Bacon. And the half way number of words is 33—the equivalent of Bacon. This could not be repeated as regards the second half, if the penultimate word was to be the 67th as the equivalent of Francis. But the total number of *letters*

in the ten lines could have been exactly halved—as 136 in the first five lines and 136 in the second five lines. This has been done. And 136 is the equivalent of ‘Bacon-Shakespeare’ (33+103).

VIII

Under no circumstances could signalling be expected throughout Ben Jonson’s second acknowledged contribution to the First Folio, in the sense of an elaborate set of signals stretching from beginning to end; it being eighty lines long. But Ben Jonson, if a signaller in his earlier and shorter poem as a more convenient vehicle for cryptography, could have arranged a general confirmatory signal by this second poem of eight times the length of the first. And the total number of letters used in this famous eulogy of the poet is 2720, exactly ten-fold the number used in the introductory lines; a coincidence that cannot be paralleled.

It is also most noteworthy that while the penultimate word of Ben Jonson’s first or ten line poem, the word “his,” is by its placing as both the 67th word and the 33rd word an equivalent of Francis Bacon, the penultimate word of Ben Jonson’s second poem, the word “volumes,” is by its numerical value, 100, the equivalent of Francis Bacon.

IX

As every one of the ten lines of Ben Jonson’s introduction to the First Folio refers to the ostensible portrait of the poet on the title-page opposite, and Ben Jonson as editor would have supplied the details for such ostensible portrait of the poet to the youthful engraver Droeshout, any signalling in the ten introductory lines might well be supplemented by some pictorial hint in the ostensible portrait.

Now the Stratfordian tradition asks us to believe that although the poet Shakespeare was a famous man in 1598—when Meres so highly praised him, and increased in fame till at least as late as 1611—when his farewell play ‘The Tempest’ was put on the stage, no portrait of the most celebrated poet of that age has come down to us which is of earlier date than this ostensible portrait of 1623—unless it be a perhaps five years earlier mortuary bust presenting a man of totally different appearance! And that is much to ask.

The background of this ostensible portrait of 1623 that Ben Jonson both supplies and asks us to “looke Not on,” is absolutely plain; and nowhere are there any accessories. All that is shown, consists of a face, a part of a collar, and the greater portion of the forefront of a doublet or coat. Thus the only chance of a signal, is by way of the tailoring of the forefront of a doublet, as indicated by the braid.

Of the three names Manners, Stanley, and Bacon, only the third could be so signalled. This would be possible by giving one side of the forefront of the doublet the tailoring proper to the back of the other side. For the difference between the two sides would show that there was a purposed suggestion of back-on, and thus of Bac-on, to those sufficiently alert.

Arguably, this has been done. For although Sir Sidney Lee has again and again insisted on it that "faulty perspective" explains the great difference between the two sides of the forefront of the doublet, the result of an inquiry instituted by the present writer through 'Notes and Queries' (see issue for Sept. 6th, 1913) and otherwise, confirmed the opinion of every portrait painter known to him that the tailoring exhibited to the onlooker's right hand as that of the left hand side of the forefront of the doublet of "This Figure," is the tailoring proper to the *back* of the other or right hand side of the doublet. Moreover the British Museum selected or 'open shelves' authority on perspective, Mr. George A. Storey, R.A., wrote to the author to the effect that Sir Sidney Lee was in error; saying that the doublet is "perfectly right as far as the perspective goes."

X

Obviously if Ben Jonson as editor of the First Folio signalled by the number of letters and words used by him in the prefatory matter, to the effect that the actual poet Shakespeare was not Shakspeare of Stratford but Francis Bacon Viscount St Alban, he may also have so signalled by the number of sheets or leaves or pages used in the volume as a whole.

Here an investigator, remembering the Bacon family motto about the middle position, is logically bound to associate the fact that the First Folio happened to present the earliest division of any collection of plays into as many as three classes. For in the presentation of three classes, one class must be allotted a central position; and the innovation might have been utilised as providing an opportunity for specially appropriate signals about Francis Bacon if there was any signalling about him anywhere.

Now in such event the novel class or section, the 'Histories,' should be found to be (1) placed between the Comedies and the Tragedies, (2) placed with its centre, an imaginary point immediately following the half-way page, identical with the centre of the whole volume. *And the 'Histories' division of the First Folio is exactly so placed.* It is a coincidence without parallel again.

XI

On the assumption that this striking coincidence possibly reveals an arranged basis of further signalling, the number of

sheets of paper used in the volume as a whole, and the number of leaves respectively to the left and to the right of the double centre, in each instance the number 227, should be a signal. And 227 happens to be the equivalent of 'Lord Viscount St Alban,' the title by which Francis Bacon was formally addressed at the date of the First Folio—as in the debates of the House of Lords in 1621, and in the letters of his friend Tobie Matthew.

Clearly, however, if we be meeting with actual signalling, then with any appearance of a signal of the formal *title* of Francis Bacon, might well be found an associated appearance of a signal of such *name*. Hence it is both logically and artistically in order that the page number imprinted upon the 454th or half-way page of this volume of, in all, 908 pages, should be, *as it is*, 100—the equivalent of Francis Bacon.

XII

Again, the word BACON occurs, as a separate word, exactly twice in the First Folio. And if Ben Jonson, as the editor of such volume, arranged any signalling at all about Francis Bacon therein, then (1) on each occasion the word should be found to have been allotted a capital B as its initial letter, (2) on each occasion the page number allotted to the page on which the word occurs should be found to be the same, and (3) the repeated page number should be found to have a significant equivalent.

Now on each occasion the word *is* given a capital B for its initial, on each occasion the page number *is* the same—53, and this number, 53, is the equivalent of POET (as P=15 O=14 E=5 T=19).

XIII

Given any signalling by Ben Jonson through any page number in the First Folio however (and we have noted arguable appearances of the signals 100=Francis Bacon and 53=Poet by way of page numbers), we should certainly find a signal by the grand total of pages in "his Booke" as indicated by the last imprinted page number of each section. Now this grand total is 303+1, +232, +993+1; or 1530. And this is just ten-fold 153, the equivalent of Francis (=67) Bacon (=33) Poet (=53).

Moreover if Ben Jonson was signalling by the desire of Francis Bacon, and if Francis Bacon, as the true author of the Shakespeare poems and plays, had himself ever arranged such a signal as 153=Francis Bacon Poet, then this appearance of a final signal of ten-fold 153=Francis Bacon Poet, should be found to be an echo of some much earlier signal of 153.

Turning therefore from the year 1623 to the year 1593, let us observe that the number 153 could have been signalled precisely three times at the very beginning of 'Venus and

Adonis'—(1) by the numerical value of the three words forming the title of such poem, (2) by the cross count of the numerical values of all the words on the title page—that is to say including the Latin motto with the title, (3) by the number of ^{words} letters used in the letter of dedication. For such numerical value ^{is} 153, such cross-count ^{is} 153, and such number of ^{words} letters used is 153.

The "first heire" of our master poet's "invention," a poem displaying every sign associated with the college elegance of the time, was given an anonymous title-page; a Latin couplet being put in place of the author's name. Twice does such anonymous title page supply the sub-surface value 153. And the 'e' at the end of the very first appearance in print of the name William Shakespeare, which is the signature to the dedicatory letter on the following leaf, is the 153rd ^{of the title} or 'Francis Bacon Poet' ^{word} letter of the dedication so signed. Hence it was a triple commencing coincidence without a parallel as regards the first published work of an author of afterwards to be disputed identity, that Ben Jonson consciously or unconsciously echoed with his concluding First Folio page number coincidence of 1530, following upon minor page number coincidences of 100 and of 53.

XIV

So far, however, we have been assuming that Ben Jonson, even if a signaller that Francis Bacon was the true author of the Shakespeare poems and plays, would have left the *text* of the plays edited by him as a collection, severely alone. But if indeed indulging in cryptography about the authorship of the plays, he would almost certainly have signalled by the last word of the poet's farewell play—unless of course the poet had himself done so. For Shakespeare's farewell play though produced on the stage a dozen years before, had not previously been printed; and as its first editor he could easily add an epilogue, or substitute a fresh epilogue if one already existed.

Hence, a whole decade ago the present writer looked into the question of what is given by Ben Jonson as the poet Shakespeare's farewell word; that is to say as the last word of the poet's farewell play 'The Tempest,' which Ben Jonson placed first of all. And in this connection we want before us the following quotations from 'The Tempest' as printed in 1623.

XV

(1) The first line of Shakespeare's farewell play, consists of the single word:

"Bote-swaine."

(2) On the second page is the short speech:

"Mira. You have often

Begun to tell me what I am, but stopt

This "B" is the printed letter in 1623 Shakespeare. It is a very large in the scroll-work around it the name "Francis Bacon" is interwoven. See the old form of the name in the title page of the 1st Folio 1623. R. T. E. L.

And left me to a bootelesse Inquisition,
Concluding, stay : not yet."

(3) At the end is the 'Epilogue: spoken by Prospero,' running thus:

- 1 "Now my Charmes are all ore-throwne,
- 2 And what strength I have's mine owne.
- 3 Which is most faint: now 'tis true
- 4 I must be heere confinde by you,
- 5 Or sent to Naples. Let me not
- 6 Since I have my Dukedome got,
- 7 And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
- 8 In this bare Island, by your Spell,
- 9 But release me from my bands
- 10 With the helpe of your good hands:
- 11 Gentle breath of yours, my Sailes
- 12 Must fill, or else my project failes,
- 13 Which was to please: Now I want
- 14 Spirits to enforce, Art to inchant,
- 15 And my ending is despaire,
- 16 Unlesse I be reliev'd by praier
- 17 Which pierces so, that it assaults
- 18 Mercy it selfe, and frees all faults.
- 19 As you from crimes would pardon'd be,
- 20 Let your Indulgence set me free."

XVI

Let us first consider the central quotation. For it presents an arguable half open half concealed signal which, if purposed as such, must have been arranged by the poet himself.

The open or half open signals of authorship possible in Bacon's favour in the main text of a poem or play away from its first or last word, would have been (1) where the noun 'bacon' or 'Bacon' occurs—a matter already explored as involving the page number 53 on each such occasion, and (2) where the letters B.A.C. occur as capitals next to each other in such order—and so far as the writer is aware that is only in the short speech before us.

Given B.A.C. as immediately adjoining capitals, however, much more is necessary. Either the C must be the initial of the word 'Con' and so provide a clean cut B.A.Con.—which is not here the case. Or else the C must be the initial of a word beginning with 'Con,' and the remaining letters of which are an equivalent of Bacon's Christian name Francis.

Moreover the capitals B.A.C. while immediately adjoining each other either horizontally or vertically, must not be immediately adjoined by any other capital.

All the conditions are met in this four-line speech allotted

to Miranda. For the last seven letters, "cluding," of the word "Con-cluding," have the total numerical value 67, which is the total numerical value of Bacon's Christian name. And the isolation of the B.A.C. as adjoining capitals is very noticeable.

XVII

The first quotation is valueless apart from the last. And there thus remains only the question of the poet Shakespeare's farewell word.

As will have been seen, it is the word FREE. And, as the present writer observed on giving it special consideration some ten years ago, it was the only word in the English language of their time that either Francis Bacon or Ben Jonson could have pitched upon, had they reason for contriving that what was to appear as the poet Shakespeare's farewell word should be one capable of separately signalling the name Francis, and the name Bacon.

The name Francis appears in the general list of words in seventeenth century lexicons—for instance in that of Edward Phillipps, and was then as always given the meaning Free; so that Shakespeare's farewell word "free" is an equivalent of Francis. And as $f=6$, $r=17$, $e=5$, $e=5$, a total numerical value of 33, Shakespeare's farewell word is at the same time an equivalent of Bacon ($=33$).

XVIII

Of course, corroborations would have been possible.

For example, the initial of this last word of the last play written by the poet Shakespeare, could have been made to combine with the initial of the first word. And, arguably enough, this *was* arranged; for the one initial is an F, and the other a B.

Then again, *both* of Bacon's *best* known forms of signature, 'Fr. Bacon' and 'Fr. St. Alban,' begin with an F and end with an N. So the epilogue, if arranged as a signal of Francis Bacon's authorship, should have been begun with an N; and the words so selected that on spelling out either signature on the initials of the words from the initial F of the last word "free," in a backward or Bac-on direction, the process should end on the initial N of the first word in clean cut fashion.

All is as if this actually had been purposely contrived in support of the unmatched double equivalency of the poet Shakespeare's farewell word. Spell either well known signature of Bacon out on the initials of words either way, that is to say either always beginning on the initial of the last word of a line or returning on the initial of the first word of the next line, and if we start from the last initial of all the signature exactly covers the epilogue.

L'ENVOI

The pieces of evidence available on behalf of a contention that Ben Jonson's allusion to the poet Shakespeare as the "Sweet Swan of Avon" was mere camouflage, a purposely misleading remark about the poet on the part of an editor bound by personal friendship and perhaps also his word of honour to keep up the long assumed mask of a still living contemporary, are not, however, limited to this formidable set from the First Folio. They begin earlier—with Ben Jonson's reprinted parody of Shakspeare of Stratford's application for coat-armour and arguable heraldic hints both in 1599 and 1616 that the actor in some way represented Francis Bacon (see 'The Great Taboo'). And they are continued later—with Ben Jonson's payment to Bacon of the supreme compliment previously paid to the poet Shakespeare, but with the postscript that Bacon, whose philosophical works as finally approved were then all in still untranslated Latin, had surpassed the ancients "in our tongue."

Neither Spedding, however, when opposing the early advocates of the Bacon-Shakespeare theory, nor Sir Sidney Lee in the 'Dictionary of National Biography' and a score of printings of his popular life of Shakspeare of Stratford as assumedly identical with the poet Shakespeare, has ever conceded or even mentioned such matters when assuming that Ben Jonson's testimony puts the actor's identity with the poet beyond rational dispute. And this should remind us that if there can be a literary camouflage in which the *camoufleur* is but a dasher-in of a touch of alien colour or shape calculated to lead a mere casual observer astray, there can also be a literary camouflage in which the *camoufleur* is a leaver-out of so many of the facts favourable to a totally different general appreciation of the actual situation as to enthrone even for earnest students a legend in the place of Truth.

This is not so inconceivable a present state of affairs regarding matters Shakespearian as some readers may think. For which of the accepted authorities has, in combating the now sixty years old Bacon-Shakespeare theory, alluded to the fact that one of Bacon's earliest and warmest friends was the son and heir of the Recorder of Stratford upon Avon, and himself in turn Recorder? Or the fact that an uncle of Francis Bacon whose affairs were legally managed by Bacon left a country house in Warwickshire adjoining the Forest of Arden, and within walking distance of the Wincot alluded to by the poet Shakespeare in connection with its "Alewife," and by a poet of the succeeding generation as famous for its Ale (see 'Taming of Shrew,' Ind.)? Or the fact that the Gloucestershire allusions of the poet Shakespeare include, on one and the same page,

three arguable allusions by his full name to Francis Bacon's Gloucestershire cousin, William Cooke (II Henry IV, v, 1)? Or the fact that such Gloucestershire cousin of Francis Bacon, resident near Gloucester, was, whether we do or do not count in the circumstances that his wife was a relative of, and himself executor-in-trust for the estate of, the owner of the manors of Woodmancote or "Woncot," and Stinchcombe or "the Hill," at least as likely to communicate the tidings of a coming Visor-Perkes law suit to Francis Bacon, who himself had interests in Gloucestershire, as was the Stratford or London actor to hear of such coming suit? Never Spedding! And never Sir Sidney Lee!

Then again, as an independent and inquiring Shakespearian of the school of Coleridge and Hallam the author must express equal surprise and regret at yet another strange feature in the attitude of authority towards the theory that the actual poet Shakespeare was Francis Bacon, and Shakspeare of Stratford upon Avon only his agent and mask. Obviously if a well known man be able to write poetry under a mask name, he is also able to write poetry under his own name which should help to keep up the mask, and any poetry written under his own name would be utterly unsafe evidence on the question of the identity of the author of the poetry issued in the mask name. Nevertheless the Editor of the 'Dictionary of National Biography' has for over twenty years been trying to make matters more difficult for supporters of the Bacon-Shakespeare theory with authoritative assertions that Bacon could only write "doggerel" and was "no poet." This, too, although Bacon's contemporaries Davies of Hereford in 1610, Edmond Howes in 1615, and Dr. Thomas Campion in 1619, bore witness that Bacon was a poet and a good one. And though twice in the seventeenth century did a standard work list him as *one of the representative poets of England* ('Annales,' & 'Jugements des Savants'). Moreover, why the official silence on such very pertinent points?

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